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Sarah Latzke

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HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE IN AN URBAN SOMALI COMMUNITY  
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by

Sarah Jean Latzke

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in English as a Second Language.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

I began teaching English as a foreign language in Japan through the Japanese Exchange Teaching (JET) Program in 2010, after completing my undergraduate degree in English Literature and Japanese Studies. During my time teaching in Japan I met very few people whose first language was not Japanese. In the course of my three years teaching in Japan at seven different schools, I taught one Japanese-Filipino student who considered English her heritage language, but could not speak it, and one Japanese-American student, who possessed an American name, but was so estranged from the English language that he did not pronounce his name in a standard English way. I will call the Japanese-Filipino student Yoshiko and the Japanese-American student Alex. If the Japanese-American student's name had been Alex /æls/ he might have pronounced it /ɔɾɛkuw/. I remember reflecting often on how Yoshiko, despite having a Japanese name, more strongly identified with her Filipino than Japanese heritage, while in contrast, Alex had absolutely no association with the U.S. or the English language. Yoshiko would bring in pictures of Filipino and English singers to school and would talk about how she wanted her mother to speak English with her. Alex in contrast would refuse to participate in English class and when asked by teachers what he spoke with his American father he would vehemently state that he only spoke Japanese. It was not until I began my graduate studies at Hamline University that I would recall these students and finally understand the cultural and linguistic loss they were experiencing. Now I see the divide that was happening in their families and how Alex's family decided that apart from his name he would be raised Japanese, where Yoshiko's family pursued a more balanced upbringing,

though her heritage language was failing. When I learned about heritage language maintenance I instantly called these students to mind. As I began my teaching career in the U.S. with Somali students, I recognized the same tensions surfacing at my new school with which I had witnessed Alex and Yoshiko struggle. I knew that pursuing the subject of heritage language maintenance would be a huge asset to make me a more effective and culturally responsive educator and that it will benefit all of my future students.

As I am now a teacher of Somali students I will briefly outline the arrival of Somali families to the U.S. to illustrate the focus of this study. Somali refugees began arriving in the U.S. in the late 1990's and early 2000's and have growing communities in metro areas in many states including Minnesota, Massachusetts, Ohio, Georgia, New York, and Maine (Refugee Processing Center, 2016). Somali communities in the U.S. continue to expand and according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2010, 129,078 people of Somali descent lived in the U.S. As with any immigrants, Somali families bring their language and culture with them and some of the earliest arrivals are now ushering in a new generation of Somali children raised in the U.S. While current families welcome children, new refugees continue to arrive each day as the Somali Civil War continually displaces inhabitants of Somalia. Many of these individuals arrive by way of refugee camps, some after years of waiting. In my experience when Somali children arrive at a new school there are still unanswered questions about how families will adjust linguistically and culturally.

In this thesis I will examine to what degree Somali immigrants and refugees maintain their heritage language after arrival in the U.S., and the relationship this has in respects to academic performance. As an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher of

Somali children I am interested in how my students and their families grow and adjust into the community in which they live. I am especially interested in how families navigate language use in their new communities and how languages are passed to the next generation. The area I serve is a particularly tight-knit community with its own Somali grocery stores, apartments, and mosques. I find occasionally that colleagues and majority group members in the community bristle at a perceived lack of assimilation in the Somali population at large, and I hope that in part this work will assuage some of those sentiments. I see families making great efforts to do what is best for their children, and I believe that establishing the value of this community's cultural assets is an important step for both Somali families and the areas in which they live. I hope the results of my study will show a positive connection between language maintenance and academic performance of Somali students, solidifying the need for positive support from family and schools so that students will attain heritage language maintenance.

My links to this community are recent; I moved to the area where I will conduct this study in August of 2016 after accepting a teaching position. I teach kindergarten English Language Learners (ELLs) at a local elementary school and have worked with all grades during summer programming. My caseload has hovered close to forty students since I began working here, and enrollment at my school continues to grow. I meet parents regularly at parent teacher conferences and Special Education meetings, which provide me with opportunities to make positive contact with families. I have had additional opportunities to make connections with parents and families through participation in a teacher led community outreach committee, which hosts cultural events, family game nights, reading events, and school wide trash clean ups with community

members. Due to the typically large size of families that my school serves, most families having six to eight children, I have been able to make connections with many families and students across all grade levels through my regular duties as a teacher and through outreach work. Though I have not been a member of this community long, I have made many observations that illustrate the need to study heritage language maintenance in this area so that student's cultural capital may be utilized.

With respect to student language development and usage in this school, I have made many observations since accepting my teaching position which demonstrate the tension surrounding language choice by students. These observations are key factors in my decision to pursue this subject. Since I began working at this school I have heard many student code-switches, rapidly changing between English and Somali, which has raised questions about how students are maintaining Somali and what attitudes towards the Somali language are like at home. Some students ostracize others who they perceive as weaker in Somali, while others shout at their classmates to, "just speak English." In further contrast to this, there are students who will code-switch into Somali when addressing me. This causes me to wonder if being the ethnic majority at school has prevented the Somali students from having a worldview that includes people who do not speak Somali, and if this has prevented them from realizing that they cannot speak to me in Somali. Alternatively, I wonder if this shows that they perceive a connection between adults in their life and the Somali language. While families adjust and ask for advice on how to help their students excel, I often find that I have to urge parents to continue speaking Somali with their children and not switch to English. Parents and guardians think they must speak English at home so that their children will do well in school.

Occasionally teachers share this opinion and try to encourage parents to speak English at home with their children. I hope that by embarking on this project I can alleviate the doubts Somali parents have about helping their children learn Somali and reaffirm to both families and my school the importance of heritage language maintenance.

### **Literature Preview**

In order to have a more complete picture of the many components to heritage language maintenance I must carefully examine the existing research surrounding it. In the literature review I will explore the history of heritage language maintenance and its roots in historical attitudes towards bilingualism. Language maintenance and bilingualism was first viewed as a hallmark of low income immigrants in the 1920's and 1930's and it took decades for language maintenance to become widely accepted; in some circles it is still reviled (Hakuta, 2011). Keeping shifting attitudes in mind is an important lens through which to view heritage language maintenance today in relation to recently arrived Somali immigrants and refugees. In addition, I will review different practices or rules that families create involving language usage in the home, also known as Family Language Policies. Some Family Language Policies are explicit, for example, the one parent one language policy, while others are nebulous and harder to define. I will also consider the role prestige, the relative standing in society of a language, plays in heritage language maintenance. Prestige can have an immense impact on language development. In some studies, which I will discuss at length families chose not to pass down their languages because they saw no value in their language (Zhang, 2010). Prestige can take many forms; for example some consider a language being offered as a high school course as a sign of prestige. Literature about identity or an individual's beliefs about themselves

will also be discussed. Identity is important to language maintenance because researchers have found that if you do not identify yourself as a speaker of a language you will not become a speaker of it (Guardado, 2002). Finally, I will explore the impact of motivation, which is an important component to heritage language maintenance. Some researchers, including Ushioda and Noels, believe that motivation is essential to language learning and that language learning cannot occur where there is no desire (as cited in Kormos & Csizér, 2008). There are various forms of motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic, and research has found that motivation that stems from an intrinsic source is beneficial to heritage language maintenance (Kormos & Csizér, 2008). Once I review the literature discussing these facets of language maintenance, the ties to academic success in schools must be examined. It is necessary to separate the above factors in order to tease out the relationship between heritage language maintenance and academics, so that the central research question can be answered. Is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school? I am seeking an answer to this research question because although there is a plethora of research on heritage language maintenance, there is none available that discusses the new urban Somali population in the U.S.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this study, I will use data gathered of student academic performance, as well as data gathered through student and family interviews, to determine if there is a relationship between Somali heritage language maintenance and academic performance. Through the capstone literature review process I will identify key tenets of language

maintenance as a field of study, such as historical attitudes towards language maintenance, Family Language Policies, socioeconomic status, prestige, identity, and motivation. The literature review will be used as a guide to focus interview questions and determine what data is necessary to answer the research question; is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school? I will approach members of my school community and seek out volunteers to participate in the study. I will use my own personal connections to find volunteers for the study. Student performance on NWEA or MAP tests (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress) will be used to compare students' performance on nationally normed tests. This test data will show how students are performing in relation to their peers across the U.S. as well as between the study participants. These test results will be provided by the school NWEA test coordinator using the school district student database. Fountas and Pinnell reading levels will be collected to show students reading proficiency and can be gathered from student cumulative files. Reading levels from Fountas and Pinnell will show if students are performing, on, above, or below grade level, or if they are making adequate growth. WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment) ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) scores will be considered as a measurement of students English language proficiency. Scores will also be retrieved from the school district's database. WIDA ACCESS scores will show student growth over time, if students have taken the ACCESS more than once, and will provide a snapshot of students English language proficiency. The information I gather will be compiled, analyzed, and verified to assure that results are valid.

### **Background of the Researcher**

After completing my teaching licensure program through Hamline University, I began to teach kindergarten ELLs in a predominantly Somali area. The students at the school I teach in all receive free and reduced lunch, and about 70% of the students are ELL; I am privy to these statistics because of my position at the school. This demographic information makes it readily apparent that parents and guardians typically are of low socioeconomic standing, and do not speak English as a native language. In my first year teaching at this school, there were 36 students on my caseload. Of those 36 students, 33 spoke Somali as their heritage language. This teaching position has granted me access to students, their families, and the community in which I work. I hope to use my role and this project to the benefit of these students and families by solidifying the value of their heritage language. I also hope this project will help me improve my craft as a teacher and as a culturally responsive educator. I plan to share my results with colleagues and families so that fellow teachers can also benefit from my efforts to better understand the tension that surrounds language maintenance and its inherent value. I believe this research is particularly important because recently Somali refugees and immigrants have become scapegoats for political figures, including Donald Trump in his 2016 presidential campaign. Somali people will benefit from their language and culture being reaffirmed as important to their success and as a vibrant part of American culture.

### **Rationale for this Study**

While there is a plethora of data available on language maintenance, to the best of my knowledge there are no studies that specifically address the Somali people or the Somali language; especially the Somali experience in urban areas in the U.S. Research



focusing on the value of the Somali language may help dispel misconceptions about Somali language use in school, and both parental and teacher reticence to encourage the use and development of the Somali language.

### **Research Question**

The guiding research question for this study is: Is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school?

### **Summary**

In Chapter One, I discussed the lack of research on Somali heritage language maintenance and how research that addresses this void will be significant to Somali speakers and the teachers that serve them. The need for this study was introduced, as well as the role of the researcher, the background of the researcher, and the guiding question that will be the backbone of this study. The introduction familiarized readers with the beginnings of my interest in the subject of heritage language maintenance and the demographic to be studied, i.e., Somali elementary school students and their families. The introduction also discussed what I hope to accomplish with the thesis; namely, establishing the value of Somali heritage language maintenance and its relationship to the academic success of Somali students. There was a brief preview of the literature review including the areas of focus, historical attitudes toward bilingualism, Family Language Policies, prestige, identity, and motivation. My interest in heritage language maintenance of Somali students and my connection to Somali families were described. I explained the stake that I have in the study and the desired impact of the study. Additionally, I explored

the gap in heritage language maintenance research on the Somali language and how this research is necessary to address attitudes towards the Somali people and their language.

### **Chapter Overviews**

In Chapter Two I will review literature relevant to heritage language maintenance in terms of its history as an area of study, Family Language Policies, socioeconomic factors, prestige, identity, and motivation of speakers to maintain their heritage languages. Chapter Three will focus on a description of the methods which will be comprised of academic measures including WIDA ACCESS scores, Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmark assessments, NWEA test data, and data gathered from semi-structured interviews which will be used to evaluate Somali heritage language maintenance in an urban elementary context. Chapter Four will present and discuss the results of this study and Chapter Five will reflect on the implications of the results. Finally, I will close with the limitations of this study and a proposal for how it can be expanded in the future.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this research is to uncover whether there is a link between Somali heritage language maintenance and academic performance. In order to have an understanding of the intended scope of this research, the reader will need to have a familiarity with the study of language maintenance as a discipline and how it has evolved over time, including a look at historical attitudes towards language maintenance. After establishing the history of language maintenance as an area of study, the reader will become familiar with important tenets of language maintenance, including family language policies, socioeconomic factors, prestige, identity, and motivation. This background is necessary to answer the question: is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school?

#### **The History of Language Maintenance**

Historically in the U.S., language maintenance has not been well received. Public awareness of language maintenance and the scrutiny surrounding bilingualism began in the U.S. in the 1920's and 1930's with the decided opinion that bilinguals were low class and should only use their native language as a crutch to help them acquire English faster (Hakuta, 2011). Additionally, in the 1920's and 1930's, a series of debates began when a child psychologist claimed that multilingual children handicapped their language growth and even caused the "retardation" of their language by knowing languages other than English (Thompson as cited in Hakuta, 2011). The decidedly negative association with

language maintenance and bilingualism had a profound effect that can still be found in society today. As Hakuta (2011) states, “society admires the bilingualism of the diplomat but not the multilingualism of the cab driver” (p. 172). This underpins the pervasive mentality that immigrants are not a cultural asset, but a liability until they assimilate, which is perpetuated in some circles of society in the U.S. today. These negative attitudes and claims against language maintenance have finally begun to fade, making way for a slew of studies that speak to the positive effects of heritage language maintenance in communities, families, and individuals which will be explored below.

### **Academic Benefits of Language Maintenance**

Current research on heritage language maintenance has found numerous positive externalities associated with continued development of heritage languages as individual speakers develop society’s dominant language. A recent study found positive links between cognition, literacy development, and metalinguistic awareness in young children who are experiencing heritage language maintenance (Proctor, August, Carlo, & Barr, 2010). This study also found that both theory and research on language maintenance supports claims that multilingual individuals make metalinguistic insights sooner, and with more depth than monolingual individuals. This scholarship shows that despite previously held misconceptions about multilingualism, it does have many benefits for learners. Other research has uncovered links to enhanced social growth, improved competitiveness for the U.S. in the global marketplace, increased national security, delayed onset of dementia by up to four years, and a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity in both people and cultures (Hakuta, 2011). Current research does more than just outline benefits to language maintenance; it also gives clear evidence

refuting commonly held misconceptions of multilingual students, that they are in some way disadvantaged by their cultural and linguistic background and not, in fact, enriched by their backgrounds.

Further research also works to dispel the misconceptions of the last century. A 2013 study in Ontario found that students born outside of Canada who spoke a language other than or in addition to English were more likely to be proficient on Ontario's Grade 6 assessments than monolingual students (Bromes, 2013). While this data does not prove that these children are superior in assessments because of their heritage language maintenance, it challenges the claims of the 1920's and 1930's that maintaining heritage language would handicap students' linguistic development. Additionally, a study of early bilinguals showed that heritage language maintenance did not hamper nativelikeness of speech in second languages (Bylund, Abrahamsson, & Hyltenstam, 2012). Specifically, adults who began speaking a second language as children showed no connection between heritage language maintenance and non-standard pronunciation of the second language.

It is important to know the history of language maintenance so that the attitudes towards it can be fully understood. Language maintenance has not always been well received, and in fact has often been discouraged. This illustrates the pressures that individuals may be under to allow their heritage language to fail or actively eradicate it. While there has been a plethora of research on the effects of heritage language maintenance, no research has been done that addresses the specific subsection of recent Somali arrivals. This project will address whether heritage language maintenance is showing evidence of the same positive academic results as other research. Next I will take an in depth look at Family Language Policies.

## **Family Language Policies**

Family Language Policies (FLPs) are an important facet of language maintenance research. FLPs are any “explicit and overt, as well as implicit and covert, planning in relation to acquisition and use of language and literacy skills in home settings and among family members” (Spolsky as cited in Kang, 2015). King and Fogle defined them as what families do with language based on beliefs and societal values (as cited in Kang, 2012). Knowing the definition of an FLP is not sufficient to understand the significance that they hold in development of heritage language maintenance; the role of FLPs must also be examined.

**Role of FLPs in Language Maintenance.** It is imperative to consider FLPs when looking at language maintenance because many studies have found that without family support it is impossible for language maintenance to occur. Parents and families should not make extensive efforts to support the dominant societal language at home, but instead concentrate on encouraging the development of heritage language. In studies that compared input children receive from parents, TV, and community to determine what combinations of input lead to language maintenance, researchers found that parental support is the most important predictor of heritage language maintenance (Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, and Shin, 2012). The same study also found that the input children receive from attending school was sufficient for children to develop societal language; meaning that families should focus on heritage language and leave societal language to develop outside of the home (Dixon et al., 2012). Another study of Korean-American families discovered that in families that did not consistently adhere to a FLP did not achieve heritage

language maintenance (Kang, 2012). Now that the significance of FLPs has been established, I will explore the different structures they can take.

**Forms of FLPs.** FLPs can take many forms. For example, in a study of Korean-Americans about 50% of participants read in both English and Korean at home with their children (Kang, 2015). This is an FLP because the participants made a decision about how language would be used in the home and followed through by creating conditions for this FLP to be carried out, they made Korean reading materials available and read in both languages. This FLP also displays some of the cultural values of the families involved. It shows that these families believe that biliteracy is an important aspect of their language maintenance and that they created a specific protocol in the home to further this goal. Another example of an FLP involved the mother pretending her children did not exist if she was not speaking German, and only when the children spoke in German would they be acknowledged (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2009). Additionally, the family did not allow TV, radio, or books into the home unless it was in German, meaning that the children consumed the same limited media repeatedly due to availability. This FLP illustrates the mother's commitment to her children's bilingualism. Another FLP is a one-parent-one-language policy that is applicable to families with parents who speak two different languages (Iqbal, 2005). In a one parent one language family, if the mother were Japanese and the father were British, the mother may choose to only speak Japanese and the father may choose to only speak English with their children.

Taking FLPs into account when studying language maintenance in communities is important because it helps the researcher identify the amount of input participants are receiving, as well as to evaluate the importance and necessity of using the heritage

language in the home. As demonstrated by the examples previously addressed, many conclusions can be drawn from investigating an FLP. Examining family FLPs offers insight into the value they place on their language, which is why this study will investigate Somali FLPs. While there is a fountain of information about FLPs available, there has not yet been any study completed on Somali Family Language Policies; this study will attempt to rectify this rift. The existence of FLPs can also be connected to socioeconomic factors, which will be explored next.

### **Socioeconomic Factors**

Socioeconomic factors play an important role in the everyday life of families, and may impact language maintenance (Proctor et al., 2010). Families that have low socioeconomic status could be struggling to acquire basic necessities, and when focus is on survival, there is less focus on language maintenance. Socioeconomic status has an established link with diminished academic achievement and is associated with limited access to both spoken language and print materials, meaning that students with low socioeconomic status have less linguistic input which could result in smaller vocabularies (Proctor et al., 2010; Foster as cited in Proctor, et al. 2010). Another connection between low socioeconomic status and heritage language loss has been attributed to parents' lack of time or means to learn English, resulting in less opportunity for parents to communicate meaningfully with children (Zhang, 2010). It is vital to consider the impact of socioeconomic status on language maintenance because the demographic this study will consider is of low socioeconomic status. While many studies have examined the relationship between socioeconomic status and language development there are no studies that address the demographic of urban Somali immigrants. In some ways,



socioeconomic status is tied to prestige, or the relative standing of a language or cultural group in social hierarchy. This link will be considered.

### **Prestige**

Prestige is the relative status that a language holds in society (Mihalicek & Wilson, 2011). In the U.S., for example, the language with the highest prestige is Standard American English; other varieties of English are often regarded poorly. Prestige is important to language maintenance because languages that do not enjoy a high level of prestige typically give way to society's dominant languages. Many studies of language maintenance support this assertion. Zhang (2010) for example, compared two groups of second-generation Chinese immigrants in the U.S. One group of families were financially middle or upper-class and spoke Mandarin Chinese, and the second group of families were lower-class and spoke Fujianese, a less prestigious dialect of Chinese. The two groups were correlated and their rate of language maintenance was compared. Zhang's study showed that Mandarin Chinese was more likely to be maintained by the second-generation than Fujianese. This increased rate of language maintenance was attributed to the prestige that Mandarin enjoys; Mandarin is becoming a featured subject in schools, which is evidence of its prestige in the U.S. Interviews showed that Fujianese speakers felt ashamed of their perceived lower-class language and encouraged their children to speak only in English, hoping that this would make them more successful in the future. A different study featuring a set of German siblings also attributed fear of stigma against immigrants and the importance of English as reasons for not passing their language to their children (Latham Keh, & Stoessel, 2017). Prestige is important when studying language maintenance because determining the relative level of prestige of a language

could help predict how likely a language is to be passed down. It also could give researchers insight into how they could help families become aware of the value of their language, thereby raising its level of prestige within a community and increasing the likelihood that it will be maintained. Due to the relatively recent arrival of Somali immigrants and refugees in the U.S., there has not been a detailed look at the relationship between prestige and Somali families; this study will examine this void and endeavor to address it. While prestige is a major factor in heritage language maintenance, it is also important for the individuals who are to carry on the language to identify with it.

### **Identity**

Identity is another essential aspect of language maintenance (Guardado, 2002). Identity is the belief that something is an intrinsic part of oneself. If students do not identify with the language at home it is unlikely that they will elect to speak it (Guardado, 2002). This means that they will experience what Guardado (2002) describes as the continuum of language loss—the slow erosion of one language until only the dominant remains. Children of Spanish speakers in Vancouver were most likely to maintain their heritage language when they identified with it and their parents' cultures. Latham Keh and Stoessel (2017) had similar findings in their case study involving three German siblings. In the study it was revealed that while the siblings maintained a degree of German their entire lives and considered it part of their identity, their language was not imparted to their children. A reason for the failure to pass German onto the next generation was a “perceived stigma of an immigrant identity” (p. 106). Both studies showed that it is possible for parents to strongly identify with their own culture, but fail to pass their language on; the learners themselves must have an attachment to the

language in order to experience language maintenance. While this look at parental identity transfer is illuminating, we must further consider student perceptions of identity in the Somali community.

Maintaining heritage language is important to second and third-generation speakers because it provides a cultural anchor; it allows the speakers to feel that they are part of their cultural group and helps them maintain connections with families and their histories. Studies by Phinney, Romero, Nave, and Haung (as cited in Cho, 2015) and Feuerverger (1991) found that second-generation speakers who lost their language experienced a blow to their self-esteem and identity owed, in part, to their parents' feelings of inferiority. Another study found that a strong sense of identity can be a predictor of higher self-esteem (Phinney, Romero, Nave, & Huang as cited in Cho, 2015). Positive identification with heritage language may be a good predictor of proficiency in that language, while feelings of distance or dislike can indicate a lack of proficiency or the failure of heritage language maintenance. Interviews conducted by Feuerverger (1991) featured responses which stated that Jewish linguistic backgrounds are important to identity because the Jewish homeland is a major symbol in that culture, and if heritage language is lost, the connection would be severed. In the same study, a Portuguese student stated that their parents had intentionally not handed Portuguese down because they were uneducated and felt as though their language had no intrinsic value, in turn causing the student to have no positive feelings about their heritage. Another interviewee described feeling "anchor[less] and vulnerable to the forces of assimilation" because their parents had not given them any cultural roots of their own (1991, p.665). It is important that work be done to specifically address the Somali community as there is a lack of

research surrounding Somali identity and its interplay with heritage language maintenance. While we consider identity a part of language maintenance, it is also essential to discuss the motivation of students to maintain heritage language.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is another important aspect of language maintenance that has been found to have a profound impact on whether or not languages are learned or maintained (Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Renaud, 2009). While motivation and identity are similar in some ways, for the purposes of this paper motivation will be considered as the individual's drive to learn the language, while identity is the person's belief that the language is an intrinsic part of themselves. The relationship between motivation or its absence and heritage language maintenance will be explored in detail.

### **Positive Motivation**

In the plethora of existing studies focusing on second-generation speakers of a heritage language we can find reasons participants cite for motivation to maintain their heritage languages. Latham Keh and Stoessel (2017) interviewed three adult siblings who were raised speaking German. These siblings identified a desire to speak to distant relatives as a main reason for pursuing language maintenance as adults. Other sources of motivation were identified by Csizér and Dörnyei, who created the motivational self-system model which contains three components: the Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience (as cited in Kormos & Csizér, 2008). The Ideal L2 Self is what speakers envision themselves as and can have a huge positive impact on motivation because speakers want to become their ideal selves. Ought-to L2 Self relates to beliefs

about oneself including duties, obligations, and responsibilities. Feelings of duty and obligation are motivators to language learning. The L2 Learning Experience encompasses motives that stem from specific situations and the immediate learning environment. For example, the home environment for heritage language speakers and encounters with other heritage language speakers can encompass the L2 Learning Experience. These three angles for examining motivation can help researchers identify where beliefs about self, obligation, and personal experiences intersect to encourage heritage language maintenance. While examining factors that create motivation, it is also valuable to consider sources of reticence to maintain a heritage language.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Lack of motivation has a particularly detrimental effect on heritage language maintenance. Cho (2015) found that of the second-generation Korean-Americans she interviewed, lack of motivation was considered one of the largest obstacles to language maintenance. Respondents to Cho cited self-consciousness about their language skills, discouragement from negative reactions from more proficient Korean speakers, and low desire to return to Korea in the future, as factors that lowered motivation. A different study found a young girl who completely estranged herself from her Spanish heritage language due to a traumatic experience with a fellow Spanish speaker (Tannenbaum, 2005). This strong relationship with trauma and her heritage language led her to become English dominant. Language maintenance is undoubtedly an arduous process for families and speakers and cannot occur without motivation. Although many studies exist that address motivation and its absence, there are none that specifically examine Somali immigrants that are currently progressing through the American education system.

## Summary

Chapter two reviewed important literature surrounding the topic of language maintenance and divided that literature into sections that will be relevant to this study: the history of language maintenance as an area of study, Family Language Policies, socioeconomic factors, prestige, identity, and motivation. This chapter discussed the disparity of information available on the Somali experience in the U.S. in relation to heritage language maintenance. This study endeavors to address these rifts in order to determine if heritage language maintenance is occurring and if it is having an effect on academic performance. This chapter was concerned with how attitudes towards language maintenance have evolved with time, from decidedly negative, to current beliefs that it has cognitive benefits. There was also discussion of family language policies and how they impact language maintenance; many researchers have found that FLPs are essential for heritage language maintenance to occur. Socioeconomic status and its links to long-term academic achievement were examined. Prestige, discussed as attitudes towards a group or language, can have great impact on the speakers of a language, and will also become particularly important when considered alongside the demographic to be studied. Identity is another important aspect of language maintenance and is a great predictor of attitudes towards language or desire to maintain language. Finally, this chapter looked at motivation, the drive that speakers feel or in some cases lack, to maintain their language.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

This capstone pursues the following research question: Is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school?

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the research paradigm adopted in this study, which is a mixed-methods study including quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The participants will be described and the setting of the research will be introduced. The chapter will discuss the methods that were used by the researcher to collect the data necessary to answer the research question. The researcher will talk about different instruments that were employed to measure the data that was collected. The format of the semi-structured interview will be presented. Finally, the chapter will end with a conclusion.

### **Research Paradigm**

The data gathered in this study relied on quantitative and qualitative measures to determine the answer to the research question. As Mackey and Gass (2016) define it, research is concerned with the creation of a hypothesis and testing of that hypothesis, which results in numerical data in the case of quantitative research, while qualitative research is research that yields data which is recorded in non-numerical terms. This study proposes to use quantitative and qualitative data to fill in any gaps that occur when only one method is used.

The research conducted in this study involved the use of mixed methods, or a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to determine the interplay between language maintenance and academic achievement. This project utilized triangulation, which is the use of several research techniques and different sources of data to explore issues from all possible perspectives (Mackey & Gass, 2016). The researcher used multiple sources of academic data on student performance in combination with data gathered from semi-structured interviews to determine if there was a connection between language maintenance and academic achievement. It was important for multiple measures to be used in order to conduct a study that would yield valid and meaningful results.

### **Participants**

Participants in this study were Somali elementary school students and their parents or guardians. Families who elected to participate were interviewed at the school and academic data was collected for students that were enrolled at the focus school and in a grade higher than kindergarten. I hoped to engage three or more separate families in order to compare students with similar backgrounds at different ages. I hoped to find families that were experiencing heritage language loss, and maintenance, so that maintenance and loss could be compared within the same community. Participants were pre-selected through acquaintances, and by approaching the Somali Cultural Liaison for referrals. I had many connections in the community who were interested in the results of this research, which made finding a variety of participants relatively easy.

The community is predominantly Somali, with new arrivals to the area speaking Somali, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Portuguese, and French. Housing in the area is primarily



apartment buildings. Families in this area are typically low income and the school does not have bus services as all students live within walking distance. Only students with special Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) ride a bus or receive transportation, none of the participants in this study received bus services. The vast majority of students and families in this community are practicing Muslims and many attend religious school, Duksi, on the weekends for instruction on Islam and Arabic. The Muslim population at the school is so prevalent that meals are carefully labeled so students always have access to meals that conform to their dietary restrictions. Many of the families in the area have anywhere from two to eleven children, with some siblings ranging from kindergarten to married adults. Families vary from recent arrivals to the area to having been in the area since around the year 2000. Parents and guardians rarely speak English and are sometimes illiterate; this is observable as many parents sign permission slips and other documents with an X instead of a signature. All names presented in this study are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants. Participant numbers have been added next to pseudonyms to ease the tracking of data.

### **Ahmed Family**

The Ahmed family was the first to join the study. The Ahmed family has three daughters: a sixth grader, Aesha, a third grader, Amina (#2), and a first grader, Ayaan (#1), and a son who was born during the data collection process of this study. This family moved to the area from the Pacific Northwestern region of the U.S. when their oldest child was in third grade. All of their children were born in the U.S. Aesha has a diagnosed learning disability so her results will not be included in the study.

### **Hassan Family**

The Hassan family arrived from Kenya in 2015 and has refugee status. They have five children; three were old enough to participate in this study. Their oldest daughter Bilan (#6) is in sixth grade, their son Bashir (#4) is in third grade, their son Burhan (#3) is in first grade and was retained for one year, they also have a daughter in kindergarten, and a one year old.

### **Mohamed Family**

The Mohamed family is made up of twelve siblings. Their mother passed away during the spring of 2017. Their father left the following year and the eldest brother has become their guardian. I interviewed seven siblings: the elder brother and guardian Mohamed, a sixth grader, a fifth grader, a fourth grade girl named Dayah (#8), a third grader, a second grade girl named Deeqa (#7), and a first grade boy named Dalmar (#6). Three siblings were not old enough to participate in the study. The sixth grader, fifth grader, and third grader have diagnosed learning disabilities so their results were not included in this study. Around eleven family members live in the home and many extended relatives live in the surrounding community. It is important to note that the Mohamed family left the area for one year before returning to the same school, resulting in some gaps in academic data.

### **Abdi Family**

The Abdi family is a family of five that moved to this state from Kenya. They have three children, their eldest daughter is in middle school, they have a daughter in fifth grade named Farhiya (#10), and a son in third grade named Faarah (#9).

## **Setting**

The setting, or focus of this study, was an elementary school (K-6) in an urban city in the North Eastern U.S. Due to my position I know that the school has around 400 students, all of whom receive free or reduced lunch, and about 70% of whom are ELLs. The school is nestled close to the local high school and middle school. The local area is comprised of a number of high density apartments and homes. The school is somewhat overcrowded. Tests are given in the classrooms, the library, and ELL classrooms. WIDA ACCESS tests and NWEAs are administered in classrooms via computer. Kindergarten WIDA ACCESS tests are paper based and are administered individually in ELL rooms or other available secure testing areas. Kindergarten is the only grade that does not participate in NWEA testing effective fall of 2016. Accommodations are provided according to 504 and Individualized Education Plans, such as individual testing or small group testing. Interviews were conducted on the school premises with the assistance of an interpreter when necessary.

## **Instruments and Measures**

### **Academic Measurement**

A number of academic measurements were employed to determine students' academic performance, English proficiency, and reading level. WIDA ACCESS scores, Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks, and NWEAs were considered. These quantitative measures were important because they helped the researcher determine if students were making academic progress in school. Some markers of academic success are students who show consistent gains in English language proficiency on the WIDA

ACCESS test, students who are reading on or above grade level on Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, students who are gaining reading levels quickly, and students who are performing at or above grade level on NWEAs, or are showing growth on their NWEAs.

### **Collection Technique One: Academic Data**

Academic data was collected from student cumulative files, instructional coach files, and organized by participants once parents or guardians consented to participate in the study. WIDA ACCESS scores, Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks, and NWEAs were compiled and student growth and proficiency were considered.

***WIDA ACCESS Scores.*** The WIDA ACCESS test is a test given yearly to students identified as ELLs. Students are given scores on a six-point scale that assesses their abilities in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The scale is as follows: entering (1), beginning (2), developing (3), expanding (4), bridging (5), and (6) is considered fully proficient. Scores that students receive can appear as decimals, for example, a student might have a 1.6 reading score, and a speaking score of 4.0. This would mean that the student is in the beginning stages of reading development in English, but that they are excelling at oral communication. Scores are given in the four domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Scores are also broken into literacy, which is an average of reading and writing scores and oral proficiency, which is an average of speaking and listening scores. The ACCESS test also provides a composite score for the four domains. Students in the state where this study is being conducted must score a composite 4.5 to exit ELL services as of 2017, prior to 2017 a 6.0 was required to exit

ELL services. In 2017 WIDA made changes to the ACCESS 2.0, raising the score required to be considered proficient and increasing the difficulty of the test. The change in scoring can cause a decrease in student scores from 2016 to 2017. Additionally more weight has been added to the reading and writing portion of the test resulting in less growth in WIDA scores by students with learning disabilities. This change in scoring must be considered when deciding if growth has taken place over the years being considered.

***Fountas and Pinnell.*** Fountas and Pinnell, or F&Ps, are a tool to assess reading levels. Scores are given in A through Z format. The lowest score a student can receive is a –A, –A scores indicate pre-literacy. This assessment system comes with a guide for expected student levels for each grade level. For example, second grade students must be reading at a level M at the end of second grade to be considered on grade level. The chart provided (cf. Figure 1) is reproduced from the Fountas and Pinnell website and shows what level is considered instructional for each grade level through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. F&Ps are administered by classroom teachers, special education teachers, or ELL teachers in fall and spring. Prior to the 2017 school year they were administered in fall, winter, and spring. Students who arrive without F&P data in the fall are tested upon arrival in the district. Kindergarten students are not given F&P assessments until winter. The school district follows F&P instructional level expectations except for kindergarten and first grade, instead expecting a C and I respectively. If a student is not reading on grade level there is a chart designed by the district to represent what constitutes adequate growth throughout the year. Table 1 shows how the district determines if students have achieved adequate growth depending on their starting point.

Fountas & Pinnell				
INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL EXPECTATIONS FOR READING				
	Beginning of Year (Aug.-Sept.)	1st Interval of Year (Nov.-Dec.)	2nd Interval of Year (Feb.-Mar.)	End of Year (May-June)
Grade K		C	D	E
		B	C	D
		A	B	C
				Below C
Grade 1	E	G	I	K
	D	F	H	J
	C	E	G	I
	Below C	Below E	Below G	Below I
Grade 2	K	L	M	N
	J	K	L	M
	I	J	K	L
	Below I	Below J	Below K	Below L
Grade 3	N	O	P	Q
	M	N	O	P
	L	M	N	O
	Below L	Below M	Below N	Below O
Grade 4	Q	R	S	T
	P	Q	R	S
	O	P	Q	R
	Below O	Below P	Below Q	Below R
Grade 5	T	U	V	W
	S	T	U	V
	R	S	T	U
	Below R	Below S	Below T	Below U
Grade 6	W	X	Y	Z
	V	W	X	Y
	U	V	W	X
	Below U	Below V	Below W	Below X
Grades 7-8	Z	Z	Z	Z
	Y	Y	Y	Y
	X	X	X	X
	Below X	Below X	Below Y	Below Y

**KEY**

Exceeds Expectations

Meets Expectations

Approaches Expectations:  
Needs Short-Term Intervention

Does Not Meet Expectations:  
Needs Intensive Intervention

The Instructional Level Expectations for Reading chart is intended to provide general guidelines for grade level goals, which should be adjusted based on school/district requirements and professional teacher judgment.

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DEDICATED TO TEACHERS

© Fountas, Irene C. & Pinnell, Gay Su and Heinemann, Portsmouth NH, 2012.

**Fountas & Pinnell**  
**LITERACY™**

10/26/16

**Figure 1. Fountas and Pinnell instructional level expectations for reading. (Fountas and Pinnell, 2012)**

**NWEA.** NWEAs, or Northwest Evaluation Association exams, are exams given to students at least twice a year to determine student growth and learning needs. NWEA is also referred to as Measures of Academic Progress or MAP test; I will refer to it as NWEA. As of the 2017-2018 school year teachers in this district can elect if they would like their students to be tested in winter if they desire further measures of student performance; testing in the fall and spring is mandatory, however kindergarten is exempt.

Table 1  
*District Growth Target for Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark*

<u>Starting Score</u>	<u>Target</u>
A (or below)	C
B	F
C	I
D	J
E	J
F	K
G	K
H	L
I	M
J	N
K	N
L	O
M	P
N	Q
O	R
P	S
Q	T
R	U
S	U
T	W
U	X
V	Y
W	Z
X	Z
Y	Z
Z	Z

Tests are proctored by school coaches and respective grade level teams. These tests are designed to measure student performance in relation to the Common Core State Standards and were used in this study as one of several measures of student academic achievement. The NWEA is given nationally and was last normed in 2015. NWEA provides a standard deviation and means for beginning of year, mid-year, and end of year so that teachers can determine if student scores are in alignment with the other 68% of students nationwide who take the NWEA. Students are tested specifically in reading and math on these exams. Students in grades 1 and 2 take the primary test, which is

completed on computers. The NWEA is adaptive and begins at the student's grade level and lowers the difficulty of questions whenever a wrong answer is submitted. In grades 1-2 the computer reads the test to students, beyond grade 2 students must read the test questions to themselves. Tests are divided into multiple strands for both the math and reading components, which vary by grade. Goals are set for NWEA each year so that teachers can determine if students are making adequate growth, but these goals are individual and change from one student to another. While the NWEA does not have standardized growth scores, instead opting to create individualized projections every year, an average amount of growth can be gleaned by looking at the test norms. The NWEA trends towards diminishing returns, seeing the most growth in the lower grades and petering down to a mere difference of 4 points in fall to spring of sixth grade. Based on this, it suffices to say that greater growth in later grades can indicate that students are closing the gap to their peers and are showing academic growth. Kindergarten has not administered NWEAs tests since the 2015-2016 school year, kindergarten is the only grade exempt from NWEA testing.

2015 READING Student Status Norms						
	Begin-Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	141.0	13.54	151.3	12.73	158.1	12.85
1	160.7	13.08	171.5	13.54	177.5	14.54
2	174.7	15.52	184.2	14.98	188.7	15.21
3	188.3	15.85	195.6	15.14	198.6	15.10
4	198.2	15.53	203.6	14.96	205.9	14.92
5	205.7	15.13	209.8	14.65	211.8	14.72
6	211.0	14.94	214.2	14.53	215.8	14.66
7	214.4	15.31	216.9	14.98	218.2	15.14
8	217.2	15.72	219.1	15.37	220.1	15.73
9	220.2	15.68	221.3	15.54	221.9	16.21
10	220.4	16.85	221.0	16.70	221.2	17.48
11	222.6	16.75	222.7	16.53	222.3	17.68

2015 MATHEMATICS Student Status Norms						
	Begin-Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	140.0	15.06	151.5	13.95	159.1	13.69
1	162.4	12.87	173.8	12.96	180.8	13.63
2	176.9	13.22	186.4	13.11	192.1	13.54
3	190.4	13.10	198.2	13.29	203.4	13.81
4	201.9	13.76	208.7	14.27	213.5	14.97
5	211.4	14.68	217.2	15.33	221.4	16.18
6	217.6	15.53	222.1	16.00	225.3	16.71
7	222.6	16.59	226.1	17.07	228.6	17.72
8	226.3	17.85	229.1	18.31	230.9	19.11
9	230.3	18.13	232.2	18.62	233.4	19.52
10	230.1	19.60	231.5	20.01	232.4	20.96
11	233.3	19.95	234.4	20.18	235.0	21.30

**Figure 2. NWEA normative test scores for reading and mathematics.**  
(NWEA, 2015)



## **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect qualitative data from participants, parents/guardians, and elementary students. Both parents/guardians and students were interviewed in order to collect and compare data that cannot be gathered through traditional quantitative means, such as information on student proficiency in Somali, as there are no proficiency tests for the Somali language. There are many case-studies that investigate language learning and language maintenance in relation to FLPs, identity, and motivation. These studies showed that the easiest and most straightforward way to collect this information was through interviews.

### **Collection Technique Two: Semi-structured Interviews**

Parent and guardian interviews were conducted in Somali with the help of the school Somali Cultural Liaison where necessary, and recorded by the interviewer. Students were interviewed by the researcher during the school day and recorded. Interviews were later transcribed by the researcher and can be found in Appendix D. The parent interview consisted of 30 questions that were categorized into 4 distinct sections: demographic information, family related language usage, time spent using Somali, and outside of family topics. The student interview follows the same format and is 31 questions long with a slightly extended outside of family topics section. Interview questions helped gather information about Somali language proficiency by asking parents and students when and how much Somali they use. Interview questions aimed to collect information on Somali language proficiency, Family Language Policies, socioeconomic factors, prestige, identity, and motivation to maintain the Somali language. The interview

also attempted to gather information about language beliefs by asking participants about whether they feel one language is more suited to specific tasks than another. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine answers to qualitative aspects of the research question. The data gathered from interviews was considered alongside academic data to determine the answer to the research question. Pseudonyms were used in presentation and analysis of the data. Some questions yielded answers that were easily recorded while others were long form questions aimed at determining extenuating factors or giving opportunities for participants to expand. Interview responses were coded after transcription.

Coding interview data consisted of determining the relationship between the literature review and interview questions. The key factors in heritage language maintenance identified in the literature review were prestige, identity, motivation, Family Language Policies, and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status did not need to be ascertained through the interview process because all students at this school are of low socioeconomic status. Two questions in the interview asked specifically about Family Language Policies and parents, guardians, and students all responded to these questions. Prestige, or the standing of a language or group in society, was evaluated through several questions such as “how does the school feel about your language and culture?” Responses in the interview that reflected the participants’ belief of Somali’s prestige were categorized as positive or negative and recorded. Additionally, responses that indicated positive Somali identity or negative Somali identity were recorded. For example, parents, guardians, or students that said they were proud to be Somali received one point towards positive identity. Motivation was recorded in the same way. Questions that asked about

language usage were separated into English and Somali language usage to help ascertain the amount each participant reported using. Questions in section A (1-6) are demographic questions, section B (7-16) asks about relationships with relatives, locations in the home, as well as different family centered activities, section C (17-24) relates to usage of Somali, and section D (25-30) focuses on outside of family topics. Questions can be found in Appendix C. The coded data was checked for reliability by a third party, who used the coding key to code two participants chosen at random. After coding and discussion the third party and I came to 100% agreement on the sample coded.

### **Analysis of Data**

Academic data was analyzed using information accumulated from cumulative files and student electronic files. WIDA ACCESS scores were used to determine student's level of English proficiency based on the six point scale provided by annual score reports. The four domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking were considered alongside composite scores in order to ensure that a balanced picture of a student's proficiency was presented. Fountas and Pinnell independent reading levels were cross-referenced with grade level norms to determine if students were below, on, or above expectations for their grade. NWEA scores were analyzed by comparing student skill level to national norms for their grade as well as their growth rates. This comparison allowed the researcher to determine if students were on grade level or on pace to close the gap with the national average. Interview questions were separated into demographic questions, questions about Family Language Policies, prestige, identity, and motivation. Answers were analyzed in terms of the above categories and helped determine whether patterns in answers could be correlated with language maintenance and academic performance.

### **Verification of Data**

In order to assure that data for this study would be valid I triangulated data by using multiple measures and sources. I used several academic measures including Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks, NWEA exams, and WIDA ACCESS scores to form a whole picture of each participant. I also looked at data as a whole for as many years as possible to track growth instead of simply judging achievement based on grade level norms.

### **Ethics**

I protected student and parent/guardian identities by designating them with pseudonyms, and converting data into graphics, such as charts and tables that removed identifying features. I completed the Internal Review Board process through Hamline University, and a similar process required by my school district in order to carry out data collection on site. I found participants through connections in the community and had the participants complete consent forms to show that they understand the scope of the capstone and the role that they will play, as well as their rights throughout the process. Once the study is complete I will maintain original data securely in my home in a locked filing cabinet and when seven years have passed I will destroy all original data collected in accordance with federal law.

### **Summary**

This chapter restated the research question, and introduced the research paradigm. The difference between quantitative and qualitative research was explained, as well as how the researcher intended to use quantitative and qualitative research to create a

mixed-methods study to triangulate results. The participants were introduced with details about their family, and living situations alongside a description of the community surrounding the school. The setting, an urban school in the North Eastern U.S., was described. Academic measurements were detailed including the WIDA ACCESS test, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, and NWEAs. Finally, the semi-structured interviews were described and then the interview questions were presented.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Results**

In this chapter I will present and analyze the results of the academic data I collected, the interviews I conducted, and discuss these results. I used Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks, NWEA math exam results, and NWEA reading exam results to draw a picture of the participant's academic levels. I used WIDA ACCESS test results to show the English proficiency level of participants and how their English proficiency has grown over time. In my interviews I asked questions designed to address key heritage language maintenance factors, including prestige, identity, motivation, and Family Language Policies. I will draw connections between my results and my literature review in order to address the results that pertain to language maintenance.

This capstone seeks the answer to the research question: Is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school?

### **Results and Analysis**

#### **WIDA ACCESS Test**

By analyzing all available WIDA ACCESS test data I was able to determine that six of the participants have been showing consistent growth in their English language proficiency (see Table 2). Farhiya (#10), Dayah (#8), Ayaan (#1), Deeqa (#7), Burhan (#3), and Dalmar (#6) all show significant growth in their ACCESS scores or have exited. Farhiya (#10) exited ELL services in the 2015-2016 school year after scoring a composite

6.0, which was exit criteria in the state at that time. Bilan (#5) shows a growth of .1 in her ACCESS score. Faarah (#9), Amina (#2), and Bashir (#4) have all hit a plateau and have seen no improvement in the past two years. When determining student growth I looked at both the composite scores below and individual scores in each domain; students who were making growth made growth in all domains and on their composite scores. The domains are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The four domains are averaged to create the composite score, which is provided in Table 2.

Table 2  
*WIDA ACCESS Test Composite Scores*

Grade	Participants									
	Farhiya #10	Dayah #8	Ayaan #1	Faarah #9	Deeqa #7	Amina #2	Burhan #3	Dalmar #6	Bashir #4	Bilan #5
K	-	1.6	<b>1.5</b>	2.2	1.2	1.4	-	<b>1.2</b>	-	-
1	3.8	-	3.4	2.9	<b>2.5</b>	2.3	<b>1.7</b>	2	-	-
2	5.3	2.6	-	<b>3.1</b>	3.1	<b>2.6</b>	2.0*	-	<b>1.7</b>	-
3	6 Ex.	<b>2.5</b>	-	3.1	-	2.6	-	-	1.7	-
4	-	3.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1.4</b>
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.5

*Note.* Ex. Indicates that student Exited from ELL.\*indicates student was retained and those scores are from his second year in first grade.

In 2017 the ACCESS test scoring system was revised, resulting in students on average scoring lower for that year. If students were tested in 2017 their data from that year is presented in bold to mark the year. The data is marked because a drop in scores that year does not necessarily equate to a lack of growth in English proficiency, so these years should be considered alongside following years when deciding if students are

showing a pattern of growth. Farhiya (#10) did not take the 2017 WIDA ACCESS test. Exit criteria have since been amended and all students who score a composite 4.5 and higher from the 2017 WIDA ACCESS test now exit ELL services. Burhan (#3) was retained in the 2016-2017 school year and repeated first grade in the 2017-2018 school year, so his test data for 2018 was placed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade row, so that all of his test data could be represented and considered.

### **Fountas and Pinnell**

Fountas and Pinnell scores can be interpreted several ways. The most common way to view F&P scores is in terms of grade level. Teachers can reference the recommended reading level for each grade to determine if students are on pace. Another way to assess progress is by growth, as students like Bilan (#5), Bashir (#4), and Burhan (#3) cannot be expected to read on grade level as soon as they arrive in the U.S., having no previous formal education. Table 3 below shows all available student data.

**Reading Levels.** Table 3 shows the district target for each trimester and grade level in the top row. Not every level of the F&P appears in the target row because students can be expected to grow more than one level in a trimester. For example, in Trimester 1 of first grade students are expected to master levels D, E and F. Looking at Table 3 above, none of the participants are currently reading at grade level, but half of the participants, Ayaan (#1), Dalmar (#6), Bashir (#4), Burhan (#3), and Farhiya (#10), have made a year's growth. I determined if students were making growth by comparing student growth to the district expectations. I provided a copy of these expectations in Chapter 3. In this table we can see that in kindergarten Deeqa (#7) and Faarah (#9) are at



Table 3

*Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmarks*

Grade	Trimester	Target	Participants									
			Farhiya #10	Dayah #8	Faarah #9	Amina #2	Deeqa #7	Bashir #4	Ayaan #1	Burhan #3	Dalmar #6	Bilan #5
K	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	A	-	-	-A	-	B	-	-A	-	-A	-
	3	C	-	-	C	-	D	-	-A	-	-A	-
1	1	F	-	-	B	-	C	-	-A	-A	B	-
	2	H	-	-	E	-	G	-	B	-A	-	-
	3	I	-	B	G	D	I	-	D	-A	C	-
2	1	K	K	-A	G	E	I	-A	-	-A*	-	-
	2	L	L	C	I	G	F	-A	-	-	-	-
	3	M	M	I	K	I	H	-A	-	C*	-	-
3	1	N	M	J	K	I	-	-A	-	-	-	-
	2	O	N	J	I	G	-	-A	-	-	-	-
	3	P	N	L	K	I	-	E	-	-	-	-
4	1	Q	N	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	R	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	S	S	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	1	T	R	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-A
	2	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-A
	3	V	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-A
6	1	W	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-A
	2	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-A

*Note.* \*indicates student was retained and those scores are from his second year in first grade.

grade level at the end of the year because Deeqa (#7) is a level D and Faarah (#9) is a level C. Ayaan (#1) and Dalmar (#6) are preliterate as they both scored -A. However, utilizing Table 1 in Chapter 3, I determined that in first grade Ayaan (#1) and Dalmar (#6), while not on grade level, have made a full year's growth by progressing from -A to D for Ayaan (#1) and -A to C for Dalmar (#6).

There are some outliers in the data that should be discussed. Dayah (#8) has a strange reading progression. She is recorded as reading at a level B at the end of Trimester 3 in first grade, but the next fall is a -A; it is very unusual for a student to go from reading to a preliterate score. Bashir (#4) has a similarly strange reading growth and had the same teacher that Dayah (#8) had when her discrepancy appeared. There may be a connection between these scores and the teacher administering the assessment. There are also many instances of students dropping a reading level from Trimester 3 of one year to Trimester 1 of the following fall. This could be explained as regression experienced over summer vacation, or it could have been done by teachers to make growth targets more attainable. Ayaan (#1) is also of note because she received her first pair of glasses in Trimester 2 of first grade and has since made a year's growth; her eyesight likely had a huge impact on her lack of reading growth in kindergarten.

## **NWEA**

The participants' NWEA or MAP results largely trended lower than the standard deviation provided by NWEA, meaning that most of the students in this study are performing below 68% of the 10.2 million students that take the NWEA each year (NWEA, 2015). I provided the national mean and determined the high and low standard deviations in Tables 4 and 5 below, presenting them alongside participant test results for ease of comparison.

In reading, Amina (#2) and Farhiya (#10) are within the standard deviation for their grade. Eight of the participants are below the standard deviation: Dayah (#8), Faarah (#9), Deeqa (#7), Ayaan (#1), Bilan (#5), Burhan (#3), Dalmar (#6), and Bashir (#4).

Table 4  
NWEA Reading Results

Grade	Trimester	High SD	Mean	Low SD	Participants									
					Farhiya #10	Dayah #8	Amina #2	Faarah #9	Deeqa #7	Ayaan #1	Bilan #5	Burhan #3	Dalmar #6	Bashir #4
K	1	155	141	127	128	135	132	144	138	-	-	-	-	-
	2	164	151	139	146	139	139	157	152	-	-	-	-	-
	3	171	158	145	150	151	139	161	155	-	-	-	-	-
1	1	174	161	148	157	-	144	169	146	144	-	108	137	-
	2	185	172	158	175	-	141	172	158	-	-	116	-	-
	3	192	178	163	183	-	147	180	161	162	-	131	150	-
2	1	190	175	159	178	153	157	176	157	-	-	129*	-	122
	2	199	184	169	183	161	146	180	-	-	-	-	-	119
	3	204	189	173	183	161	174	183	168	-	-	151*	-	132
3	1	204	188	172	189	153	167	166	-	-	-	-	-	145
	2	211	196	180	200	162	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	214	199	184	199	166	171	170	-	-	-	-	-	149
4	1	214	198	183	204	158	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	219	204	189	194	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	221	206	191	198	176	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	1	221	206	191	211	-	-	-	-	-	166	-	-	-
	2	224	210	195	-	-	-	-	-	-	148	-	-	-
	3	227	212	197	214	-	-	-	-	-	148	-	-	-
6	1	226	211	196	-	-	-	-	-	-	157	-	-	-
	2	229	214	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	230	216	201	-	-	-	-	-	-	158	-	-	-

*Note.* \*indicates student was retained and those scores are from his second year in first grade. SD = Standard Deviation. Values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

In math, of the ten participants, Farhiya (#10) is keeping pace with national mean scores, Dayah (#8) is just below, and Amina (#2), Faarah (#9), Deeqa (#7), Ayaan (#1), Bilan (#5), Burhan (#3), Dalmar (#6), and Bashir (#4) are well below the standard deviation. Farhiya (#10) is within the standard deviation and is keeping pace with the

Table 5  
NWEA Math Results

Grade	Trimester	High SD	Mean	Low SD	Participants									
					Farhiya #10	Dayah #8	Faarah #9	Deeqa #7	Amina #2	Ayaan #1	Dalmar #6	Bilan #5	Bashir #4	Burhan #3
K	1	155	140	125	128	128	138	137	130	-	-	-	-	-
	2	165	152	138	140	136	151	144	133	-	-	-	-	-
	3	173	159	145	157	153	173	158	138	-	-	-	-	-
1	1	175	162	150	161	-	166	153	147	141	131	-	-	114
	2	187	174	161	177	-	172	166	138	-	-	-	-	117
	3	194	181	167	182	-	190	180	125	154	153	-	-	128
2	1	190	177	164	186	154	185	168	158	-	-	-	114	127*
	2	200	186	173	189	168	195	-	152	-	-	-	112	-
	3	206	192	179	186	169	197	174	183	-	-	-	126	135*
3	1	204	190	177	181	167	191	-	171	-	-	-	149	-
	2	211	198	185	201	180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	217	203	190	203	193	188	-	173	-	-	-	150	-
4	1	216	202	188	210	188	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	223	209	194	202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	228	214	199	212	198	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	1	226	211	197	211	-	-	-	-	-	-	140	-	-
	2	233	217	202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	-	-
	3	238	221	205	224	-	-	-	-	-	-	144	-	-
6	1	233	218	202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	143	-	-
	2	238	222	206	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	242	225	209	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150	-	-

*Note.* \*indicates student was retained and those scores are from his second year in first grade.  
SD = Standard deviation. Values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

typical NWEA mean scores. Dayah (#8) is within decimal places of the lower end of the standard deviation, and appears to be on pace to catch up within the next year. Faarah (#9) has fallen below the standard deviation since the first trimester of 2017 and is very close to the lower end of the standard deviation, but his scores appear to have plateaued in the third trimester of first grade.

Since the NWEA does not have standardized growth scores I evaluated student growth by examining changes in scores between trimester 1 and trimester 3 each year for individual students and for the national mean. As the NWEA sees diminishing returns over time I judged student progress based on whether students were making gains higher than the changes in average national growth. Additionally, I considered scores from the previous trimester 3 to trimester 1 when determining if students are on pace, as the NWEA mean scores show a consistent small drop in scores over summer, which leaves students who gain over summer unaccounted for. Farhiya (#10), for example, had an overall difference of 2 in her scores from trimester 1 to trimester 3 of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, where the national mean showed a change of 11.6 on average; however, she gained 7 points over the previous summer where most students lose 2, and lost only one point the following summer where students lose 1.6 on average. Looking at Farhiya's (#10) scores as a whole from the summer of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to trimester 1 of 5<sup>th</sup> grade I saw that her change was a net positive 9, where the national mean ultimately ends as well. I did this same evaluation with each participant and found that in NWEA reading Farhiya (#10), Dayah (#8), Ayaan (#1), and Burhan (#3) are making more growth than national mean. Dalmar (#6) made growth, but it is difficult to gauge his pace with only one year of data. In reading Amina (#2), Faarah (#9), Deeqa (#7), Bilan (#5), and Bashir (#4) are not making growth above national mean and do not appear to be on pace to close the gap. In NWEA math Farhiya (#10), Dayah (#8), Dalmar (#6), and Burhan (#3) have made growth above national mean within their grade level. Ayaan (#1) made growth in math, but more data would be needed to show if she is projected to catch up to national mean scores. In math Faarah (#9), Deeqa (#7), Amina (#2), Bilan (#5), and Bashir (#4) are not making growth above the



### **Parent and Guardian Interviews**

Interviews were conducted at the school with the assistance of the school's Somali Cultural Liaison when necessary. Parents and guardians were told that the research was focused on language use at home before interviews and were asked if they had any questions before the interview began. One parent volunteered to participate in the project, but after several failed attempts to schedule an interview they declined the interview while still allowing their children to participate.

### **Discussion of Parent and Guardian Interviews**

The parent and guardian interviews provided an interesting juxtaposition because two of the interviewees, Hassan and Ahmed, are a generation older than the third interviewee, Mohamed, who was 19 when I interviewed him. All of the interviewees consider Somalia their home country, although Mohamed was born in a refugee camp and has never been to Somalia. Hassan has five children, Ahmed has four, and Mohamed is caring for nine younger siblings and a child of his own. Below I will discuss some of their responses at length (see Table 7). Appendix D can be consulted if the reader wishes to read a full transcription of interviews.

**Family Language Policies (FLP).** In regards to Family Language Policies Hassan and Ahmed responded that in their homes both parents only speak Somali with the children, but that they never ask their children to use a specific language. However, it is possible that Hassan was not telling the truth because two of his children claim that he requests they speak English at home. Mohamed responded that his family has no set rules on which language to use, but that they change between languages naturally. Mohamed

Table 7  
*Parent and Guardian Coded Interview Responses*

Maintenance Indicator	Participants		
	Mohamed	Hassan	Ahmed
FLP	No	Yes	Yes
Positive Prestige	2	2	2
Negative Prestige	4	3	2
Positive Identity	4	3	5
Negative Identity	2	2	-
Positive Motivation	3	3	6
Negative Motivation	4	5	2
Somali Use	12	13	25
English Use	11	7	2
Perception of Somali Fluency	3	4	3
Perception of English Fluency	1	-	2

*Note.* FLP abbreviates Family Language Policy.

does prefer to give directions in Somali and tries to use Somali more in the home since the children spend so much time at school. All of the respondents seemed to think that the idea of having rules for their children about language use was strange.

**Prestige.** Questions that elicited responses that could be categorized as prestige had mixed replies. The following responses fall into negative prestige because all of the interviewees related feelings that Somali was insufficient for certain tasks. In his reply when questioned about school and whether they help their children with homework, Ahmed expressed frustration that he is unable to help his children because their work is in English. Hassan and Mohamed both said that they help with homework but can only do so in English because homework is always in English. Ahmed and Hassan also expressed frustration that none of their children have Somali teachers and that English is the language of school. Hassan stated that the teachers do not understand Somali and it is unclear if he is referring to the Somali language or Somali culture as well. I also felt that



this reflected negative prestige because the interviewees have been given the impression that their language is not suited to academia. Apart from academics I also found connections to prestige and the perceptions that parents and guardians have of their standing in the community.

When discussing how comfortable the interviewees felt in the community results were also somewhat mixed. Both Ahmed and Hassan feel that the local area and school have been very welcoming and accommodating to Somali families, which I marked as positive prestige. Ahmed also shared that he enjoys when people try to speak to him in Somali or ask him to teach them Somali, which I also recorded as positive prestige. Mohamed on the other hand feels that while the school has been very accepting and helpful, there are pockets in the local community that do not want Somali people there, which I counted towards negative prestige. He does believe that Somali people have been working very hard in the community and that they are beginning to get recognition for their work.

**Identity.** Throughout the interview it was apparent that all of the interviewees consider the Somali language as central to their identities and their families. All of the interviewees indicated that their language was important to their families and that they hoped their children or dependents would hold onto it as an important vehicle for both their culture and religion. Mohamed said that he never wants to forget where he came from or his language because it has influenced his life. I reflected this in the positive identity row. Ahmed said that when you forget your mother tongue you forget your culture, which I also recorded as positive identity. All interviewees seemed to have some tensions about the intersection of language and school. All three felt that the school

treated them well but seemed frustrated that the school language was only English, which makes helping with schoolwork or meeting teachers difficult despite the presence of a Somali Cultural Liaison at the school.

**Somali and English Usage.** Each instance of a parent or guardian identifying when they used either English or Somali for a situation was recorded. For example, when I asked Ahmed, “when you come home what do you talk about? What language do you use?” and he responded that they use Somali, I recorded it in the Somali Use row. This data was kept so that comparisons could be made in self-reported use of Somali or English by parents aligned with Family Language Policies.

**Perception of Student Somali and English Fluency.** The parent and guardian response to inquiries about which language their children were stronger in was mixed. Ahmed said that he thought his children were stronger in English, while both Hassan and Mohamed thought that Somali was stronger. However, when preference was questioned answers often changed. Mohamed said that he thought his siblings were stronger in Somali but later said, “I’ll say they prefer English... Because it’s easy... They have more understanding [in English.]” These two responses resulted in a mark for both the English fluency and Somali fluency rows. Ahmed also thought that his children preferred English over Somali due to the environment, which I marked in the English fluency row. Hassan in contrast is the only parent who thought his children were both stronger in Somali and preferred it.

**Motivation.** The interviewees had strong responses to being asked how important it was to them that their children continue to speak Somali or marry a Somali person. At

different points in the interview all of them stated that they felt it was essential that their children or dependents keep Somali because it is their mother tongue and will help them keep their culture and religion. These responses can be seen in the positive motivation row. For example, Ahmed said that he needed to keep his Somali to speak to family back home. He said that if he forgot his language he would need interpreters to stay in contact with family. I recorded this as positive motivation. All three said that the only way that they would be accepting of their children or dependents marrying a non-Somali speaker would be if they were marrying a Muslim. An example of negative motivation that I recorded was when Ahmed stated that the language of school is English. I marked this as negative motivation because Ahmed does not consider Somali to be essential to academic success, which he also later equated to success in life. All of the interviewees have strong motivation to keep their Somali and a strong sense of Somali identity. However, indicators of negative motivation did appear when questions about language use were asked. As previously stated in the literature review however, a strong parent identity is not enough to ensure language maintenance (Latham Keh & Stoessel, 2017). Student responses must be considered before any conclusions can be drawn.

I created Table 8 below to aggregate all of the positive and negative maintenance indicators from parents. This was accomplished by adding all the positive rows together and all the negative rows together. The perception of student fluency and Somali and English use rows were not included in the totals for this table. Table 8 shows that despite the importance that Mohamed and Hassan both place on Somali in their lives, that overall their responses indicated a sense that Somali may not be needed or useful in their daily life. The table also confirms Ahmed's steadfast position that Somali is essential to his life.

Table 8  
*Parent and Guardian Overall Maintenance Indicators*

Maintenance Indicators	Participants		
	Mohamed	Hassan	Ahmed
Positive Indicators	9	8	13
Negative Indicators	10	10	4

### **Student Interviews**

Students were interviewed at school whenever their classroom teachers permitted. Students were brought to a quiet location in the school, varying from the cafeteria to unused classrooms. I was familiar with some of the students from summer programming, and had taught two of the students the year before. The interviews were all conducted in English; the Somali Cultural Liaison expressed a belief that all of the participants would be able to complete interviews conducted in English.

### **Discussion of Student Interview**

Student interviews, just like the parent and guardian interviews, provided interesting insight into differences in dynamics between families and at times even within families. Student results also span from grades one to six, and even from oldest child to youngest within a family. Below I will discuss at length some of their responses. Their coded responses can be found in Table 9, which is provided below. A full transcript of student interviews can be found in Appendix D.

**Family Language Policies.** Within families, responses about the existence of Family Language Policies were not always consistent. Ayaan (#1) said that her parents both spoke Somali Bantu, which is consistent with her father's response, but her

Table 9  
*Student Coded Interview Responses*

Maintenance Indicators	Participants									
	Ayaan #1	Amina #2	Burhan #3	Bashir #4	Bilan #5	Dalmar #6	Deeqa #7	Dayah #8	Faarah #9	Farhiya #10
FLP	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	-	No	No	No
Positive Prestige	1	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	2	1
Negative Prestige	-	1	3	2	1	1	3	3	1	1
Positive Identity	8	5	8	2	9	9	5	8	7	8
Negative Identity	3	5	2	7	1	1	1	4	4	2
Positive Motivation	5	3	5	2	5	5	2	4	5	4
Negative Motivation	1	1	-	3	-	-	2	1	1	1
Somali Use	7	7	7	3	11	9	8	6	6	7
English Use	5	6	6	8	4	2	8	6	8	6

*Note.* FLP abbreviates Family Language Policy

sister Amina (#2) said that her family does not care. Burhan (#3), Bashir (#4), Bilan (#5), and their father Hassan also had different responses when asked about family language rules. Burhan (#3) and Bashir (#4) said that their parents both speak English at home. Bilan (#5) on the contrary said that her mother only speaks Somali, but that her father speaks both. However, in Hassan's interview he stated that at home the parents only speak Somali. I believe that this discrepancy, which I will discuss in chapter 5, is because the school's Somali Cultural Liaison was present at the interview and that the family may be much closer to an English only policy at home. Dalmar (#6) and Dayah (#8) both said that the only rules for language at home are no swearing, which is consistent with Mohamed who said that the family had no particular rules for language usage at home. Faarah (#9) and Farhiya (#10) both stated that there are no rules for language use at home.

**Prestige.** There were several noteworthy topics that came up with strong relationships with prestige throughout the interviews. When discussing how students thought their teachers felt about the Somali language and culture, some replied that Somali was bad, others said they were told not to speak it, and one student replied that it made her teacher “unhappy.” Students also stated that they felt the school was unhappy if they spoke Somali and that the school does not like it if they do not know what you are saying. Deeqa (#7) said that her teachers assume she is swearing whenever she speaks Somali. Dayah (#8) stated that you get sent to the office if you speak Somali. Several simply said “I don’t know” to both questions and four students gave positive answers to both questions. Dalmar (#6) often seemed to perk up when he thought the answer to a question was English and would tell me, “the way you guys talk” as if he expected it to make me happy each time he said he spoke English.

**Identity.** Identity is an integral component of language maintenance so student replies regarding identity will be given special attention. Ayaan (#1), Deeqa (#7), Faarah (#9), and Farhiya (#10) all answered “What languages do you speak?” with Somali. Amina (#2), Burhan (#3), Bilan (#5), Dalmar (#6), and Dayah (#8) all said Somali and English. Burhan (#3) answered only English. This pattern repeated itself with little variation throughout the interviews. Burhan (#3) has limited English ability because he arrived in the U.S. only two years prior, but he steadfastly maintained that he spoke only English, even when his English was so limited that he had a difficult time understanding questions. It is significant because as discussed in the literature review, language maintenance is unlikely to occur if speakers do not consider their language as a part of themselves (Guardado, 2002). Burhan (#3), Bilan (#5), Dalmar (#16), Deeqa (#7), and

Dayah (#8) all reported that they feel their Somali language is stronger. Bashir (#4) and Farhiya (#10) said that their English was stronger. Ayaan (#1), Amina (#2), and Faarah (#9) either answered “no” or “I don’t know.” Ayaan (#1), Amina (#2), Burhan (#3), Bilan (#5), Dayah (#8), Faarah (#9), and Farhiya (#10) all said it was important to them that they kept Somali. Bashir (#4) is the only participant who answered “no” and Deeqa (#7) is the only one to answer, “I don’t know.” Ayaan (#1) said that the only way to be a good mother was to speak Somali. Nine of the students responded negatively when asked how they would feel if they forgot Somali. Bashir (#4) is the only student who gave a positive answer; he said, “better.” When asked if they think of themselves as Somali or American, Burhan (#3), Bilan (#5), and Dalmar (#6) said Somali. Amina (#2), Dayah (#8), Faarah (#9), and Farhiya (#10) said they think of themselves as both Somali and American. Ayaan (#1) and Bashir (#4) both answered that they think of themselves as American. This gives some insight into how the identity rows were populated.

**Motivation.** Motivation to learn or use Somali is essential to language maintenance. Students had varying responses when asked questions about the role of Somali in their lives or their future. Ayaan (#1) wants to keep her Somali because she wants to have children some day and she considers Somali an important part of being a mom. Amina (#2) and Faarah (#9) both said they needed to keep Somali to speak to their families. Dayah (#8) thinks that Somali is good for her but that she cannot use it at school. Burhan (#3), Bilan (#5), and Farhiya (#10) all want to continue to speak Somali, but could not pinpoint a reason. Bashir (#4) is the only student who does not want to keep his Somali language. All of the students said they would want a job where they could speak Somali when they grow up. All of the students want to go to visit Africa or Somalia

someday, either to see family, see Africa itself, or in Dayah's (#8) case become even better at Somali. These answers are reflected in the Somali motivation row.

In order to easily review all of the positive and negative maintenance indicators I created Table 10 below, which is the result of adding all indicators from the coded student interview response in Table 9. Table 10 shows, at a glance, which students identified strongly as Somali speakers and consistently conveyed a desire to maintain it. It also shows which students felt the opposite.

Table 10  
*Student Overall Maintenance Indicators*

Maintenance Indicators	Participants									
	Bilan #5	Dalmar #6	Ayaan #1	Faarah #9	Farhiya #10	Burhan #3	Dayah #8	Amina #2	Deeqa #7	Bashir #4
Positive Indicators	16	16	14	14	13	13	12	8	7	5
Negative Indicators	2	2	4	6	4	5	8	7	6	12

**Somali and English Use.** As with the parent and guardian interviews I totaled up each instance of a participant identifying when they used a language to create these rows. For example, when Faarah said, "I use [Somali] in the car to speak to my parents." I recorded this as Somali Use. I kept this data because I wanted to note if there were any discrepancies in participant replies as the interview progressed. In the case of Bashir this did happen. Bashir said several times that he only spoke English, but later when questioned about language use with specific family members he was able to identify several people he speaks Somali with and situations where he does speak Somali.

#### **Students Growth and Maintenance Indicators**



Of the ten participants, half are showing consistent academic growth in multiple measures. The five students that are showing consistent growth all have higher positive heritage language maintenance indicators than negative. The five students with academic growth were Ayaan (#1), Burhan (#3), Dalmar (#6), Dayah (#8), and Farhiya (#10). These students also had higher or equal amounts of self-reported Somali and English usage throughout their interviews. None of these students self-reported that they used more English than Somali. Overall, students with higher positive Somali maintenance indicators and higher self-reported Somali language use had better academic outcomes.

## **Discussion**

As stated in the literature review, the key factors of heritage language maintenance are Family Language Policies (FLP), socioeconomic factors, prestige, identity, and motivation. My results support many of these claims; particularly that identity and motivation are strong predictors of maintenance. All of the families in this study have low socioeconomic status, which Proctor et al. (2010) found to be a significant barrier to language maintenance; however, five students are making academic gains and appear to be maintaining their heritage language, showing that other indicators of maintenance may carry more weight.

### **Students Making Academic Growth**

I will now discuss the students with academic growth: Ayaan (#1), Burhan (#3), Dalmar (#5), Dayah (#8), and Farhiya (#10). I will explore the relationship between their results and FLPs, prestige, identity, and motivation.

**FLPs.** Kang (2013) found that FLPs are essential to heritage language maintenance in Korean families. It is difficult to say if these results support Kang's 2013 study as Ayaan (#1) and Burhan (#3), two of the five participants showing academic growth, stated that there are FLPs in place at home. Dalmar (#5), Dayah (#8), and Farhiya (#10) all stated that there are no particular rules about language use in their families. Whether Dalmar (#3) and Dayah (#8) have an FLP in place at home may be debatable, as their older brother acknowledged that he intentionally tries to use Somali at home and for instructions. It is also possible that Farhiya's (#10) parents have an FLP in place that she is unaware of, since her parents declined the interview. Without complete information about policies at home it is hard to definitively support Kang's 2013 findings.

**Prestige.** Zang (2010) explored the role of prestige in heritage language maintenance and found that feeling ashamed of one's language is a huge barrier to maintenance. Ayaan (#1), Dalmar (#5), and Farhiya (#10), three of the students with greater academic success, had positive or neutral prestige indicators. Dayah (#8) and Burhan (#3) had net negative prestige indicators, but are still making academic growth. The negative prestige experienced by Dayah (#8) and Burhan (#3) stemmed from school policies and teacher reactions towards Somali. Policies that appear to have influenced these results include putting students in time out at recess or sending them to in-school suspension when caught speaking Somali. Despite these negative experiences Dayah (#8) and Burhan (#3) both have high positive identity and motivation indicators, which may indicate that identity and motivation overpower prestige as maintenance factors.

**Identity.** Guardado's 2002 study of Hispanic families in Vancouver found that students who did not identify with a language failed to learn it, regardless of input. Ayaan

(#1), Burhan (#3), Dalmar (#6), Dayah (#8), and Farhiya (#10) had high indicators for positive identity, all making either eight or nine statements to that effect, and all reported using either more or equal amounts of Somali and English. In most cases their identity indicators were significantly higher than many of the students with lower academic performance, lending even more credence to Guardado's 2002 study.

**Motivation.** Kormos and Csizér's 2008 study on motivation and the motivational self-system explores the power that motivation has in heritage language maintenance, including aspects of the Ought-to Self, which encompasses the participants' beliefs that they were obligated and responsible for maintaining their heritage language. These students all made either four or five statements that showed a positive motivation for keeping Somali, which was typically higher than any of the students who are not making academic growth. These results show that high positive indicators for identity and motivation seem to overcome negative prestige and low socioeconomic status, just as Kormos and Csizér predicted in their 2008 study.

### **Students Struggling Academically**

Students who were not making academic growth had lower Somali positive maintenance indicators or lower amounts of self-reported Somali usage than students who did have growth. Students who were not making academic gains were Amina (#2), Bashir (#4), Deeqa (#7), and Faarah (#9). I will discuss those student's results in terms of FLPs, prestige, identity, and motivation.

**FLPs.** Faarah (#9) and Amina (#2) stated that they had no FLP in place at home, and in the case of Deeqa (#7), "I don't care." Bashir (#4) stated that his family is English

only. This reinforces claims by Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, and Shin (2012) that FLPs are necessary to promote language maintenance. These students' families are not taking steps to support Somali development, or in the case of Bashir (#4), actively working against it to promote English.

**Prestige.** Both Zang's 2010, and Latham Keh and Stoessel's 2017 studies discussed the role of prestige in heritage language maintenance. Both studies showed that low prestige led to reduced rates of heritage language maintenance and drew connections to shame and perceived stigma. Amina (#2), Bashir (#4), and Deeqa (#7) all had more negative prestige indicators than positive. This shows a connection between low prestige, and low maintenance indicators, as well as reduced academic achievement.

**Identity.** Identity is one of the most important factors for maintenance according to Guardado (2002), who said that children will chose to not speak a language if they do not identify with it. That claim seems to hold true as Amina (#2), Bashir (#4), and Deeqa (#7) all had low positive identity scores compared to their negative indicators, and all reported Somali usage equal to or lower that of English usage. Bashir had significant negative indicators for both identity and motivation, in support of Guardado's (2002) findings on the importance of positive identity and Kormos and Csizér's 2008 study on motivation. Amina (#2), Bashir (#4), and Deeqa (#7) all had more negative indicators than positive in prestige, which Zang (2010) states can lead to language loss.

**Motivation.** The link between motivation and maintenance is also easy to observe in students like Deeqa (#7) and Bashir (#4), who have low motivation scores and low reported Somali use and are also struggling academically. Unlike the other participants

not making academic growth, Faarah (#9) had more positive prestige indicators than negative, more positive identity indicators than negative, and more positive motivation indicators than negative. However, like Bashir (#4), he reported less Somali usage than English usage. This may indicate that he was not entirely truthful in his interview or that actual language use may overpower other maintenance indicators. Ultimately, the common thread between Amina (#2), Bashir (#4), Deeqa (#7), and Faarah (#9) was more negative language maintenance indicators and higher self-reported English use.

### **Outliers**

Bilan (#5) is the only participant who had high positive heritage language maintenance indicators and high self-reported Somali usage that did not have academic growth. A possible explanation for her performance is the Family Language Policy in place at home that encourages the children to only use English. Another possible factor could be that she is a recent arrival and began learning English later than any of the other participants in this study, which could be slowing her academic progress.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I presented the results of my data collection. These results included the scores from the WIDA ACCESS test, Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmarks, NWEA reading exams, NWEA math exams, parent/guardian interviews, and student interviews. Parent/guardian and student interviews were further discussed in terms of Family Language Policies, prestige, identity, and motivation, so that themes in answers could be explored. In Chapter Five I will discuss the limitations of my study, and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I will detail some recommendations based on the findings and discuss the limitations that I discovered throughout the course of my research. I will share recommendations for future research that could be done to continue and widen the scope of this project. I will close with a summary of this chapter, which answers the question: Is there a correlation between the maintenance of Somali heritage language and academic performance in relation to national norms of urban Somali elementary students in a focus school?

### **Limitations**

There were a number of factors that I felt hampered my research. The lack of Somali proficiency tests, small sample size, the interpreter's status as a community elder, my status as a teacher, and the fidelity of the Fountas and Pinnell reading benchmark assessment all presented different challenges.

#### **Lack of Somali Proficiency Test**

A factor that I lamented foremost was the distinct lack of Somali language proficiency tests. Instead of a standardized measure on which to judge student proficiency in Somali, I had to design interview questions to attempt to tease out student proficiency and try to gather that information from parents, guardians, and students themselves.

### **Small Sample Size**

I also struggled with what I felt was a small sample size. I originally hoped for the participation of around twenty students, but only fourteen joined my initial data gathering, four of which I later removed because of their documented learning disabilities. I often felt throughout the course of this project that more participants would make it easier to trace academic growth and tease out the relationship with language maintenance. I also hoped that my sample would include more families, though I did value the comparison I was able to make between siblings, as some of the students making academic growth come from the same families as students who are not making growth.

### **Interpreter and Somali Cultural Liaison**

Another limitation I discovered after I began conducting interviews was that the Somali Cultural Liaison that volunteered to help with this project is a community elder. In part due to this, I felt like some of the interviewees were not as open as they would have been with a different interpreter, despite the knowledge that their participation was entirely anonymous. Also, because of the interpreter's position in the community, mothers seemed unwilling to be interviewed and only male parents and guardians who volunteered to participate came in for interviews. I feel like the inclusion of a mother could have added a valuable perspective. There were also several instances where I asked the Somali Cultural Liaison to assist with student interviews and they refused based on the belief that the students were capable of completing the interview alone. Despite this

confidence, I found that a few of the questions were not understood by a handful of participants.

### **Teacher Status**

As I was interviewing parents, guardians, and students there were times when I felt that the participants would not be entirely honest with me because I was a teacher at the school. Despite assurances that their answers were confidential and that their participation would not negatively affect them, the participants seemed to hold back whenever it appeared like something negative could come up. In particular, students would hesitate when asked how their teachers felt about the Somali language or culture. One student would become particularly upbeat whenever they thought the answer to a question was English because he seemed to think that I wanted to hear that. I would be interested to see if a stranger collecting the same data would get the same answers that I did.

### **Unreliable Scores**

An additional stumbling block that I discovered well into the course of this study was how unreliable Fountas and Pinnell reading scores were. Due to the way the school administers Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments and how they are used for teacher professional goals, there is a distinct lack of oversight in their application and a drive for high scores. Student scores often fell more than expected over summer breaks and students occasionally made extraordinary growth, only to have that growth disappear the next fall when a different teacher administered the assessment.



## **Implications and Recommendations**

There are a number of implications and recommendations I would make based on my findings from this study. I first recommend that teachers need to be more informed about language development and how to address language use in the classroom. I further recommend that parents and guardians be better informed about the benefits of bilingualism and how to promote it.

### **Recommendations for Teachers**

My findings during the interview have led me to believe that some teachers at this school see Somali language in a negative light and that that has been communicated to students. Several students reported that their teacher would punish them for using Somali, even during free play times like recess. Students seemed disheartened when their teachers reacted negatively to their language, but would close up if they thought they were being negative towards a teacher, refusing to say if a teacher's remark made them sad or upset. This leads me to believe that these students felt that what their teacher was doing was wrong, but were afraid to be critical of a teacher. I think teachers need to receive more training on the importance of positive attitudes towards student languages because language and identity are so intertwined. Attacks on a student's language almost certainly have an impact on their identity and self-worth. Teachers should be taught the value and impact of a heritage language.

I believe that one way to positively address language usage in the classroom would be to give teachers metalanguage necessary to address their bilingual students. For example, teaching staff that intermixing languages or rapidly switching between them is

called code-switching and that they can ask or challenge students to code-switch when they are speaking another language. Since so many teachers at this school are monolingual they should be given examples of how to positively address language usage in the classroom.

### **Recommendations for Parents and Guardians**

Another important recommendation would be for the local Somali community to be made aware of the importance of heritage language maintenance. There are several ways this could be accomplished. One way would be to let the Somali elders in the community know about the results of this project and to provide them with examples of Family Language Policies so that they could educate others. The school could also reach out to the community and have a cultural night that includes education about the importance of language maintenance. Additionally, teachers and staff could talk to parents about their language usage at home and encourage the use of Somali or educate parents about Family Language Policies.

### **Future Research**

I have several recommendations for future research: taking a deeper look at connections between sibling data; an examination of the effect of heritage language use with family and non-family; the creation of a Somali language proficiency test; examining teacher impact on maintenance; and collecting data in a school system that has not changed its grading system recently.

While working on this project I often attempted to ascertain if there was a difference between language development of older and younger siblings. I wondered if

older children would have an increased likelihood of being more proficient because they had fewer English speaking family members. I also considered that older siblings may have more of a burden placed on them by parents to become de-facto translators.

Another question I had was whether there is an impact to having non-family members to communicate with in a heritage language? It seems almost natural that having relationships outside of family that require heritage language use for communication would increase the likelihood of heritage language maintenance. I would like to see if student language use could be examined in terms of who they are communicating with and if they have higher rates of maintenance when they have a higher number of available speaking partners.

The creation of a Somali proficiency test could have greatly streamlined my process because it would have been a definitive way for me to say if heritage language maintenance was occurring. The existence of a Somali proficiency test would also help lend prestige to the Somali language and could be used by institutions to determine if requirements for foreign language study have been met, among other uses. I also think the creation of a credible exam of Somali proficiency would give researchers a powerful tool with which to examine the effect of immigration on heritage language maintenance in the Somali diaspora. It would show the rate at which the Somali language is lost after immigration and if this population is more linguistically vulnerable than populations with more prestige. Any proficiency test would have to allow oral and literacy scores to stand alone because the Somali language has only recently become a written language and many native speakers of Somali are not literate in Somali.

A look into teacher impact on language maintenance would also be of benefit to both teachers and the Somali population. Teachers have widely disparate opinions on heritage language maintenance, ranging from disapproval to hearty support. I think that a study focusing on the impact of teacher opinion on heritage language maintenance would help establish to what extent teachers should be held responsible for supporting or discouraging such maintenance. I want to know if a teacher being openly desultory about a particular language is more detrimental to a student than the language being disparaged upon in the mainstream media.

A final stumbling block I faced that I believe could easily be rectified would be visiting a school district that has a consistent grading system. My school district has changed grading systems several times in the past few years which made using student progress reports impossible as a measure. I instead focused on other academic measures, like standardized testing, for my data. I think it would be valuable to visit a school district that has seen less change because they could offer a much larger picture of student achievement and progress over time.

### **Sharing Results**

I have several plans to begin sharing my research. I intend to present my results at a professional development meeting at my school so teachers I work with can develop an understanding of the importance of heritage language maintenance. I also want to provide teachers in my district with a general understanding of how to approach bilingualism in their classroom and with the families they serve. I will contact the parents and guardians who participated and offer to discuss my results with them if they are interested. I hope to

share this information with other ELL teachers in my school district as well as the teachers at my school. I plan to contact MinneTESOL so that my research can find a wider audience. I will also look for opportunities to present my project outside of the state where I teach.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I presented the limitations of my research, recommendations based on my findings, and suggestions for future research. I stated that all of the participants in this study who were showing consistent academic growth had high heritage language maintenance indicators and high self-reported Somali use. I discussed the limitations on my research, namely, a lack of a Somali proficiency test, small sample size, how the interpreter was a community elder, my own position as a teacher, and the reliability of Fountas and Pinnell reading scores. I recommended that teachers receive more training on language development and language usage in the classroom, and that parents be informed of the importance of heritage language maintenance and strategies to promote it in the home. Finally, I made several suggestions for future research including looking into differences between siblings, the impact of communicating with non-family members of the same heritage language, the development of a Somali proficiency test, a close study of the impact that teachers have on language maintenance, and if these results are replicable in a school district that has seen less change in its grading policies.

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## Appendix A: English Consent Letter for Parents

January 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a graduate student at Hamline University, which is located in Minnesota. In order to complete my Master's Degree I need to do research on Somali and English speaking families. This letter is asking for your permission to participate in my research project.

I would like to learn about the impact that maintaining the Somali language has on student's academic achievement in school. This research project is important because it will help show if there is a positive link between Somali language development and performance in school.

To complete my research I will collect data from students, and parents or guardians. I will collect data on your child's performance in school and on standardized tests to help show the connection between language development and school performance. I will interview both you and your children at a time and place that is convenient for you. Interviews will take about an hour and will be recorded using an electronic device. I will have a Somali interpreter available.

There is no risk to you or your children for assisting in this research project. All of your responses will be confidential and both you and your children's names will be changed so that you are not identifiable in any way. Any data that I collect will be stored in a secure location and destroyed after the project is completed. You may withdraw from this study at any time with no consequences to yourself or your children. I will share what I learn through this project with you and with colleagues so that we may better serve your children.

I have received approval from the Hamline University School of Education to carry out this research project. When I have completed this project it will be published online at Hamline University's Bush Library Digital Commons which may be accessed using the internet. I may also use or publish this research in other ways.

If you agree and would like to participate please sign the duplicate page that is provided. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via phone, or email.

Sincerely,

Sarah Latzke

Email:

Cellphone:

Hamline Advisor: Andreas Schramm,

*Informed Consent to Participate*

I have received your letter about your research project and understand that you will be collecting academic data on my children and interviewing my children and myself. I understand that my participation poses no risk to myself or my child and that I may withdraw at any time without consequence.

---

Parent Signature

Date

## Appendix B: Somali Consent Letter for Parents

### Warqadda Ogolaashaha ee Waalidiinta

Janaayo 2018

Waalidka ama Mas'uulka,

Waxaan ahay arday diyaarinaya shahaadadda labaad ee Jaamacadda Hamline University, taasoo kutaala Minnesota. Si aan udhameeystirto shahaadadeyda Mastarka waxaan ubaahanahay inaan cilmi baaris ku sameeyo qoowsaska kuhadla afka Soomaaliga iyo Ingiriiska. Warqaddan waxaan ku codsanayaa inaad isiisaan ogolaasho si aan oga qeyb qaato mashruuceyga cilmi barista ah.

Waxaan jeclaan lahaa inan wax ka ogaado sida kuhadalka afka Soomaaliga ay saameyn ugu leedahay ardayga hormarkiisa tacliinta ee iskuulka. Mashruucaan waa muhiim sababtoo ah waxay tuseysaa hadii ay jirto xadhiidh wanaagsan oo u dhexeeya hormarka afka Soomaaliga iyo wax qabadka ardayga ee iskuulka.

Si aan usoo dhameystiro cilmi baaristeyda waxaan ardayda, waalidka iyo masuulkaba kasoo aruurinayaa xog. Xog aruurintan waxay ku saabsantahay sida canugaaga uu yahay wax qabadkiisa iskuulka iyo imtixaanadda si loo arko xadhiidhka ka dhaxeeya hormarka luuqadda iyo hormarka tacliinta iskuulka. Waan idin wareysanayaa adiga iyo canugaaga waxaana idinku wareysanayaa meesha iyo waqtiga aad adiga jeceshahay. Wareysiga wuxuu qaadanayaa saacad kaliya waana la duubayaa codka ayadoo aan isticmaalayo qalabka wax duuba. Turjubaan Soomaali ah ayaa ila imaandoona.

Wax halis ah kuguma jirto adiga ama canugaaga inaad igula garab gashaan cilmi barista mashruucan. Dhamaan jawaabahaaga waxay noqon doonaan kuwo sir ah magacaaga iyo magaca canugaaga waan bedeli doonaa si aan lagu garanin. Wixii xog ah ee aan aruuriyo waxaan ku keedin doonaa meel amaan ah waana la baabi'in doonaa mashruuca markuu dhamaado kadib. Waad ka bixi kartaa daraasadaan xili kasta wax dhibaata ahna kaagama imaanayaan adiga ama caruurtaada. Waan kula qeybsan doonaa adi iyo dadka aan isla shaqeenno wixii aan kabarto mashruucaan si aan si wanaagsan ugu adeegno caruurtaada.

Waxaan ka helay ogolaansho jaamacadda Hamline University ee qeybteeda Waxbarashadda si aan ufuliyo mashruucaan. Markii aan dhameeystiro mashruuca waxaa lagu daabaci doonaa qadka Online-ka ee maktabadda Bush Library Digital Commons loo yaqaano taasoo laheli karo ayadoo la isticmaalayo internet. Waxaa kaloo suurta gal ah inan siyaabo kale u daabaco daraasadaan.

Hadii aad aqbashay aadna jeclaan lahayd inaad ka qeyb qaadata fadlan saxiix baalka lagu siiyay. Hadii aad qabto wax su aala ah fadlan ilasoo xadhiidh si telefoon ah, ama iimeel.

Qeeyr badan,

Sarah Latzke

Email:

Cellphone:

Hamline Advisor: Andreas Schramm,

*Ogolaadaha ka qeybqaadanaya*

Waan helay warqadaada daraasadda ah waana fahmay inaad caruurteyda ka aruurneyso xog akadimiyo ah inaad caruurteyda iyo anigaba aadna wareysaneyso. Waan fahamsanahay in ka qeyb qaadashadeyda aysan igu keeni doonin aniga iyo caruurteyda wax Qatar ah iyo in waqtiga aan rabbo aan kalaaban karo caqabad la'aan

---

Saxiixawaalidka

Taariikh

## Appendix C: Interview Questions

### *Parent/Guardian Interview.*

#### **A. Demographic info:**

1. Where were you born? (Or, what do you consider your home country?)
2. What languages do you speak?
3. How long have you lived in this area?
4. How big is your immediate family?
5. How many children/dependents do you have?
6. How many people live in your home?

#### **B. Family Related Language Use**

subtopics: a. different relatives b. different locations in home or elsewhere c. different activities (chores, family events/gatherings, child care)

7. Do you try to use only one language at home or do you use several languages at home?
8. When you come home what do you talk about? What language do you use?
9. What do you talk to your grandparents, parents, siblings or children about? Follow up: how they are doing, health, work, etc.)? What language do you use?
10. Do you use specific languages for specific things? For example, only Somali when talking about cooking? Or only English when talking about school?



11. Do your children/dependents understand you when you speak about school in Somali?
12. What language do you give directions in? What kind of directions do you give?  
Example: How to cook or clean something.
13. What do you talk about with your children/dependents? Follow up: Do your children talk to you in Somali?
14. Do you ask your children/dependents to speak Somali with you? Are there times when you want them to speak only Somali, for example, when talking about family or religion?
15. Who do your children/dependents speak Somali with? (siblings, parents, cousins, grandparents, friends etc.) What do they talk about?
16. When your children/dependents are doing homework what language do they use?  
Do you help them? What language do you speak when you help?

### **C. Time Using Somali**

17. How much of the day do you speak Somali? Most of the day, half of the day, some of the day, or very little? When and where do you speak Somali/English?
18. How much of the day do you think your children/dependents speak Somali? Most of the day, half of the day, some of the day, or very little? When and where do they speak Somali/English?
19. Do you think your children/dependents are stronger in Somali or English?

20. What language do you think your children/dependents prefer? Why do you think that?

21. How important is it to you that you continue to speak Somali? Can you tell me why?

22. How important is it to you that your children/dependents continue to speak Somali? Can you tell me why?

23. What language do you think is better to use to talk about school? Why?

24. In the future is it important to you that your children marry someone that speaks Somali? Can you tell me why?

**D. Outside-of-Family Topics:**

25. What language do you use at:

- a. a friend's house? Why? How easy/hard is it?
- b. the hospital/doctor? Why? How easy/hard is it?
- c. work?(If they are working.)Why? How easy/hard is it?
- d. the grocery store? Why? How easy/hard is it?
- e. the mosque? Why? How easy/hard is it?
- f. the school? Why? How easy/hard is it?

26. When you feel upset or sad, what language do you use? What specifically do you say?

27. What language do you use to talk about politics, like the Muslim travel ban? Why do you use that language?
28. How do you think the people in this state feel about your language and culture?
29. How do you think the school feels about your language and culture?
30. We've talked a lot about family and languages. Are there other things you thought of that we did not talk about yet?

***Student Interview.***

**A. Demographics:**

1. What languages do you speak?
2. How big is your immediate family?
3. How many people live in your home?
4. How many brothers do you have?
5. How many sisters do you have?

**B. Family Related Language Use**

6. What language(s) do you speak at home? Which language do you speak the most?
7. When you get home what do you talk about? What language do you use?
8. Do you speak English at home? Who do you speak it with at home?
9. What language do you speak with your parents? What do you talk about?

10. What language do you speak with your brothers or sisters? What do you talk about?
11. Does your family have any rules about what language you use at home? For example, are you only allowed to speak Somali with your parents?
12. Do you have aunts or uncles? If yes: What language do you speak with your aunts and uncles? What do you talk about?
13. Do you have grandparents? If yes: What language do you speak with your grandparents? What do you talk about?
14. Do you have cousins? What language do you speak with them? What do you talk about with them, school, sports, or friends?
15. Do you talk to your family about what you are learning in school? What language do you use?
16. Do you talk to your family about how you feel in Somali? Why/ why not?

### **C. Time Using Somali/Locations**

17. How much of the day do you speak Somali? Most of the day, half of the day, some of the day, or very little?
18. Who do you speak Somali with? (other children, siblings, parents, classmates, etc.)
19. Do you think you are stronger with one language or another? Which?

20. Outside of home where do you speak Somali, for example at school, on the playground, in class, or at Duksi? Who do you speak Somali with? What do you talk about?

21. What language do you think is better to use to talk about school? Why?

**D: Outside Family Topics**

22. When you feel upset or sad, what language do you use? What specifically do you say?

23. Is it important to you that you continue to speak Somali? Can you tell me why?

24. In the future if you forgot Somali how would you feel?

25. When you grow up do you want a job where you can use Somali?

26. Do you think of yourself as Somali or American? Both?

27. How does your teacher feel about Somali language and culture?

28. How does the school feel about Somali language and culture?

29. Do you feel proud to speak/be Somali?

30. Would you like to go to Africa or Somalia someday? Why?

31. We've talked a lot about family and languages. What else did that make you think about?

## Appendix D: Transcripts of Interviews

**A. Demographic info:**

1. Where were you born? (Or, what do you consider your home country?)

**Ahmed:** Somalia.

**Hassan:** Somalia.

**Mohamed:** I was born in Kenya. My parents grew up in Somalia and they tell me it's dangerous. I consider my home country Somalia even though I grew up in Kenya.

2. What languages do you speak?

**Ahmed:** Somali.

**Hassan:** Somali, English, May May, and Arabic.

**Mohamed:** I speak English, and Somali.

3. How long have you lived in this area?

**Ahmed:** 4 years. (13 years in the U.S.)

**Hassan:** 2 years.

**Mohamed:** About 6 years now. I lived in Kentucky before. I came to Kentucky in 2004. We liked Kentucky, but we had family here and everyone was like, "this place is good."

4. How big is your immediate family?

**Ahmed:** Mom, dad, 3 kids.

**Hassan:** 8

**Mohamed:** Like everyone? Me right now and my siblings. My mom recently passed away and my dad is not in our lives.

5. How many children/dependents do you have?

**Ahmed:** 3 kids. (A baby boy on the way at the time of the interview.)

**Hassan:** 6.

**Mohamed:** Brothers 5, sisters 5.

6. How many people live in your home?

**Ahmed:** 5.

**Hassan:** 8.

**Mohamed:** 10.

### **B. Family Related Language Use**

subtopics: a. different relatives b. different locations in home or elsewhere c. different activities (chores, family events/gatherings, child care)

7. Do you try to use only one language at home or do you use several languages at home?

**Ahmed:** The kids always speak English when they are at home, but we(the parents) only use Somali.

**Hassan:** Now we(parents) are using only one language, but the kids are using two languages. We only speak the Somali language at home because mom (their mother) only speaks Somali.

**Mohamed:** No we go back and forth. English and Somali.

8. When you come home what do you talk about? What language do you use?

**Ahmed:** We use Somali at home. We talk about the situation at school.

**Hassan:** The kids' day, school, work. Somali.

**Mohamed:** We talk about life, what happened, school, soccer. Back and forth in English and Somali.

9. What do you talk to your grandparents, parents, siblings or children about? Follow up: how they are doing, health, work, etc.)? What language do you use?

**Ahmed:** My parents have been dead for a long time. My brothers and sisters are in Africa, only one is in Kentucky. We always talk about their health and the future. We talk in Somali.

**Hassan:** Health, and school. Somali.

**Mohamed:** I have a grandmother. She's still around, but right now she's in Africa visiting. She'll be home soon. I talk to her about how life is there, how is her blood sugar, is her diabetes going down. Of course in Somali.

10. Do you use specific languages for specific things? For example, only Somali when talking about cooking? Or only English when talking about school?

**Ahmed:** We talk about culture in Somali.

**Hassan:** Only Somali.

**Mohamed:** It depends who you're talking to. If you're talking to someone your age it's easier to talk English because you both speak English. But if you're talking to someone older, like an elder, you'll be talking Somali.

11. Do your children/dependents understand you when you speak about school in Somali?

**Ahmed:** Yes.

**Hassan:** Yes. (Emphatic)

**Mohamed:** Yeah. Of course.

12. What language do you give directions in? What kind of directions do you give? Example: How to cook or clean something.

**Ahmed:** I give directions in Somali. (He didn't provide examples.)

**Hassan:** May May (Somali dialect). For cooking, and cleaning. They're bad at cooking, but they can make pasta.

**Mohamed:** At home? That's hard cuz sometimes I try to, like, use less English because they're at school 8 hours a day. I try to lower that down at home cuz our language. So pretty much our language at home. I tell them to get something out of the fridge, tell them there's a towel in the bath.

13. What do you talk about with your children/dependents? Follow up: Do your children/dependents talk to you in Somali?

**Ahmed:** I talk to them about their future and what is expected when they grow up.

**Interviewer:** "Does Ayaan talk to you about Minecraft?" \*laughing\* Yes. They communicate in Somali and English, but they only watch things in English.

**Hassan:** May May.

**Mohamed:** They love to talk about what happened at school, or whatever. They love to talk about soccer. They talk to me in Somali. We go back in forth. Two sentences in English then switch.

14. Do you ask your children/dependents to speak Somali with you? Are there times when you want them to speak only Somali, for example, when talking about family or religion?

**Ahmed:** Always I talk to them in Somali because I don't want them to lose Somali. Maybe one day they will go back to Somalia and they (won't be able to talk).

**Hassan:** Somali sometimes, English. The neighborhood.

**Mohamed:** I don't ask them it's just natural. If they want to talk to me on their own they usually speak Somali. But if they don't get the concept they say [it in English]. When elder people come to our house and we have a get together I like use our language. It makes more sense. They don't understand [English].

15. Who do your children/dependents speak Somali with? (siblings, parents, cousins, grandparents, friends etc.) What do they talk about?



**Ahmed:** Mom, dad, siblings, everyone in the community, aunts, uncles. We talk about school, and their health.

**Hassan:** Mom, dad, friends, Duksi teachers.

**Mohamed:** Each other, friends, me, my sister, elders, grandma. We just talked to grandma last night they talked about how they missed her, how they're doing at school, how she's doing while this process is going on.

16. When your children/dependents are doing homework what language do they use? Do you help them? What language do you speak when you help?

**Ahmed:** Homework is in English so they use English. I can't help because it's all in English.

**Hassan:** English. Yes. English. Because it is all in English.

**Mohamed:** That's mostly English. **Interviewer:** "Do you help them?" Yeah. In English because it's hard to use Somali when it's all in English.

### C. Time Using Somali

17. How much of the day do you speak Somali? Most of the day, half of the day, some of the day, or very little? When and where do you speak Somali/English?

**Ahmed:** I always speak Somali. Even if I grew up here I would speak Somali. I can use it at work because I work with Somali people.

**Hassan:** Most of the day. In the Neighborhood.

**Mohamed:** Half the day because I'm with my friends and my friends are Somali. I'll just say half.

18. How much of the day do you think your children/dependents speak Somali? Most of the day, half of the day, some of the day, or very little? When and where do they speak Somali/English?

**Ahmed:** About half. They speak Somali inside the community, and neighborhood.

**Hassan:** Most of the day because they are new. Neighborhood.

**Mohamed:** A little bit because they're at school. Most of the day. They get home and they go back and forth, but I think they speak more English because they're required to speak English at school.

19. Do you think your children/dependents are stronger in Somali or English?

**Ahmed:** English

**Hassan:** Somali.

**Mohamed:** I would say Somali.

20. What language do you think your children/dependents prefer? Why do you think that?

**Ahmed:** English because of the environment.

**Hassan:** Somali. But they are very interested in English because of their educations.

**Mohamed:** To speak? I'll say they prefer English... Because it's probably easy. I mean because they speak it all the time. They have more understanding. I'm not saying they don't understand Somali. English is just the common thing we use at home and even everywhere they are they are just using English.

21. How important is it to you that you continue to speak Somali? Can you tell me why?

**Ahmed:** It's very important because I need Somali to speak to family back home. If I lost my Somali I would need interpreters to talk to my family.

**Hassan:** No answer.

**Mohamed:** It's important because I just want (to) never forget where I came from or my language. Or where we were raised because that influenced a lot.

22. How important is it to you that your children/dependents continue to speak Somali? Can you tell me why?

**Ahmed:** This is our mother tongue so it is really very important. For example, when you keep your language you are keeping your culture. That is important.

**Hassan:** Very, because it is their mother tongue.

**Mohamed:** No answer.

23. What language do you think is better to use to talk about school? Why?

**Ahmed:** English because the language of the school is English. The teachers can't understand Somali.

**Hassan:** English because they can't use Somali since the teachers are not Somali.

**Mohamed:** I don't.... necessarily. When they get home from school they speak Somali. If they had a rough day I'm going ask them in English and if they answer in Somali I'll go with that. **Interviewer:** "So you use the language they pick?" Yeah.

24. In the future is it important to you that your children/dependents marry someone that speaks Somali? Can you tell me why?

**Ahmed:** Yes. Because they will keep their culture. To keep their culture for their children. **Interviewer:** "[Ayaan] said she wants to speak Somali to her kids when

she grows up.” (Ahmed laughed) Maybe in the next couple of years she’ll get better [at Somali] right now she’s losing it.

**Hassan:** Yes. Because of our tradition and culture. But they can marry out of the community if they are marrying a Muslim.

**Mohamed:** I’m not their father I’m just their brother. I don’t know. It could be hard to see them marry someone that’s not Somali. I want them to marry someone they can communicate with. And religion can complicate it. It would be hard to marry someone that’s not my religion.

#### **D. Outside-of-Family Topics:**

25. What language do you use at:

**Ahmed:** a friend’s house? Somali Why? My friends are Somali. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Hassan:** a friend’s house? If they are Somali I use Somali. Why? If they are English I use English. How easy/hard is it? A little bit.

**Mohamed:** a friend’s house? Somali. Why? We talk about Somali. How easy/hard is it? It’s easy for me.

**Ahmed:** the hospital/doctor? I get a translator. Why? N/A How easy/hard is it? N/A

**Hassan:** the hospital/doctor? Mostly in the hospital the doctors have translators. Mostly I use myself for translating. Why? Depends on the health issue. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Mohamed:** the hospital/doctor? English. Why? Obviously. How easy/hard is it? I went to school here so it’s easy for me.

**Ahmed:** work? Mostly Somali. Why? There are a lot of Somali. The supervisor is not so we get help to talk to them. How easy/hard is it? Easy

**Hassan:** work? If they are working. Somali and English. Why? Somali for coworkers and English for supervisors. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Mohamed:** work? English of course. Why? How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Ahmed:** the grocery store? Broken English. **Interviewer:** “I talked to you the other day in English! I know your English is better than you’re letting on.” Dad laughs. Why? How easy/hard is it? Difficult.

**Hassan:** the grocery store? English. Why? The cashiers all speak English. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Mohamed:** the grocery store? When I'm shopping with my siblings they say something in Somali. But (to the cashier) English. Why? N/A How easy/hard is it? It's easy.

**Ahmed:** the mosque? Somali Why? Because it is the mosque. How easy/hard is it? It's too easy.

**Hassan:** the mosque? Somali. Why? No response. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Mohamed:** the mosque? Somali. It's gotta be Somali. I just came from there! Why? It has to be Somali. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Ahmed:** the school? I use the school interpreter. Why? N/A How easy/hard is it? N/A

**Hassan:** the school? English. Why? Because the teachers speak English. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

**Mohamed:** the school? English because it's all in English. Why? Already answered. How easy/hard is it? Easy.

26. When you feel upset or sad, what language do you use? What specifically do you say?

**Ahmed:** Somali, it depends on the message. For example, if I hear sad music from Africa.

**Hassan:** Somali. It depends on what is happening.

**Mohamed:** I learned to use both because I've been... since I was a kid Somali has been what my parents tried to get me to speak all the time. They didn't want me or my siblings to forget our language. I would say Somali. I know how to, describe things in Somali.

27. What language do you use to talk about politics, like the Muslim travel ban? Why do you use that language?

**Ahmed:** Somali. Most of the people I talk to about it can't speak English.

**Hassan:** Both. Somali if I'm talking to Somali people. English when talking to English speakers.

**Mohamed:** That's hard because I can be both.

28. How do you think the people in this state feel about your language and culture?

**Ahmed:** When I talk to people in this state they try to talk to me in Somali or the ask me to teach them Somali, but Somali is very difficult. I think they think well of Somali people.

**Hassan:** Great. Very welcome.

**Mohamed:** I mean... there's people that don't want us here. We need to set the bar. Show that we can work and accomplish things if we work hard. Like our soccer team. I see some people that are really broken hearted. I feel like we showed that we can do things here and we're allowed to be here and we can accomplish things.

29. How do you think the school feels about your language and culture?

**Ahmed:** I think they think it is good. I feel welcome.

**Hassan:** Great. Like we are very welcome.

**Mohamed:** The schools helped us a lot. Like, when I went to the high school they would let me leave for Friday prayers. The school does a really good job understanding that. They accept it.

30. We've talked a lot about family and languages. Are there other things you thought of that we did not talk about yet?

**Ahmed:** No. I hope you use this information gets used to help improve the school.

### *Student Interview.*

#### **A. Demographics:**

1. What languages do you speak?

**Ayaan:** I speak Somali and Somali Bantu.

**Amina:** I don't know. Somali and English.

**Burhan:** Somali and English.

**Bashir:** English.

**Bilan:** English and Somalia.

**Dalmar:** Somali and English.

**Deeqa:** Somali.

**Dayah:** Somali and English.

**Faarah:** Somali.

**Farhiya:** Somali.

2. How big is your immediate family?

**Ayaan:** 6.

**Amina:** I only have 5 people. (Baby brother wasn't born yet).

**Burhan:** 9.

**Bashir:** 7.

**Bilan:** 8.

**Dalmar:** I don't know... 11.

**Deeqa:** I can't remember. **Interviewer:** "I think there's 10 of you right?" No! **Interviewer:** "Ok. I'll keep marks." (taking tally and listing names. Final tally was 13).

**Dayah:** I don't know. A lot. 12 probably.

**Faarah:** 6 people.

**Farhiya:** 6.

3. How many people live in your home?

**Ayaan:** I already said.

**Amina:** Everyone (5).

**Burhan:** 7.

**Bashir:** 7.

**Bilan:** (counting on fingers) 5.

**Dalmar:** All of us live together. **Interviewer:** "So if you have 6 brothers and 4 sisters, is your family 10 people?" NO! More than 10. \*counts family on his fingers\* and my big brother is taking care of me. **Interviewer:** "He's doing a good job." He buys us clothes. **Interviewer:** "He loves you a lot." Not me! **Interviewer:** "He wouldn't take really good care of you if he didn't love you." I guess.

**Deeqa:** 11.

**Dayah:** 11.

**Faarah:** 6.

**Farhiya:** 6.

4. How many brothers do you have?

**Ayaan:** 0 (brother wasn't born yet).

**Amina:** 1.

**Burhan:** 2.

**Bashir:** 1.

**Bilan:** 3.

**Dalmar:** 6.

**Deeqa:** I can't remember (Lists brothers.) Wait I didn't add \_\_\_\_! **Interviewer:** "So there are 11?" YES. 7 brothers.

**Dayah:** 6.

**Faarah:** 0.

**Farhiya:** 1.

5. How many sisters do you have?

**Ayaan:** 2.

**Amina:** 2.

**Burhan:** 3.

**Bashir:** 3.

**Bilan:** 3.

**Dalmar:** 4.

**Deeqa:** Lists sisters again. **Interviewer:** "You have a big family." I don't know how I can deal with it. (End total 6).

**Dayah:** 6. I like when there's a lot of family because if something is dirty you can all help.

**Faarah:** 2.

**Farhiya:** 1.

## **B. Family Related Language Use**

6. What language(s) do you speak at home? Which language do you speak the most?

**Ayaan:** Somali Bantu. I speak the most Somali.

**Amina:** Somali.

**Burhan:** We talk Somali. Somali and English.

**Bashir:** Just English.

**Bilan:** Somali. English (the most).

**Dalmar:** The way you guys speak, but sometimes at home we speak Somali. Sometimes we say wahairwe, that means, give it to me that's my stuff. Abai

means please give it to me. **Interviewer:** “What language do you speak the most?” Somali.

**Deeqa:** Somali. Sometimes English. **Interviewer:** “Which one do you think you speak the most?” Somali.

**Dayah:** Somali, sometimes English because my brother asks things sometimes. When my aunt comes to our house I speak Somali, but when she’s not there I speak English.

**Faarah:** English and Somali. English.

**Farhiya:** English and Somali. Somali.

7. When you get home what do you talk about? What language do you use?

**Ayaan:** My favorite channel (youtube), English.

**Amina:** I talk about school. **Interviewer:** “What language do you use?” Sometimes English. Sometimes Somali.

**Burhan:** Ummmmmm. We talking... What’s that mean? **Interviewer:** “When you get home at the end of the day. Do you talk about school, recess, what you learned?” Ohhhhhh. School. **Interviewer:** “What language do you use when you talk about school?” English!

**Bashir:** I talk to mom. **Interviewer:** “What do you talk to mom about?” Pizza. **Interviewer:** “What language do you use?” English.

**Bilan:** School, lunch, recess, friends. Somali.

**Dalmar:** Having fun at recess. We just talk to each other and play games. **Interviewer:** “What language do you use?” English the way you guys talk. But sometimes we talk Somali. (Another student ran up and said, “you’re rude” in Somali.) When you tell him to go he said hassip, it means you’re being rude. Not teachers, but when people just say no, no you’re rude. **Interviewer:** “He said I was being rude?” Yeah! “Hassip” it is Somali. And ungla. Is Somali. **Interviewer:** “What’s that?” That’s how you guys talk! I’m saying that.

**Deeqa:** I don’t know. School sometimes. English.

**Dayah:** School. Somali. Everything is in Somali.

**Faarah:** I watch TV.

**Farhiya:** School sometimes. English.

8. Do you speak English at home? Who do you speak it with at home?



**Ayaan:** No... Yeah. I speak English. But my mom doesn't understand sometimes. I speak English with my sisters. I'm going to get glasses just like my sister. (Describes purple glasses with stars on them).

**Amina:** Sometimes. My sisters.

**Burhan:** No. Somali.

**Bashir:** Yes. My dad. **Interviewer:** "Do you speak it with your brothers and sisters?" I don't know.

**Bilan:** Ununn. (no).

**Dalmar:** My big brother and my sisters. My little brother he knows Somali.

**Deeqa:** Yes. My sisters and my brothers.

**Dayah:** Sometimes, my brothers and sisters and my older brother and sister (guardians).

**Faarah:** Yeah. My sisters.

**Farhiya:** Yeah. Siblings.

9. What language do you speak with your parents/guardian? What do you talk about?

**Ayaan:** Som.... I already tell you! ... We talk about Minecraft and silly stuff.

**Amina:** My language(Somali). I talk about... I don't know. School. It's not good. (singing to self, I'm not sure what song or language).

**Burhan:** Only English. Going to park.

**Bashir:** English. **Interviewer:** "What do you talk about?" Something.

**Bilan:** Somali. School.

**Dalmar:** Somali! I say that like a lot of times. My big brother (guardian) and my sisters. My little brother he understands. I said "makas" that means take off your diaper. We watch his pee then we put a diaper on him.

**Deeqa:** English... No. Not English. Somali. Wait we use both. We don't talk about nothing. He tells me to clean the floor and stuff like that. And I say, but you're showering, and he's like, after I shower. Stuff like that.

**Dayah:** English sometimes Somali. He asks me questions. Why did you do at school today?

**Faarah:** Somali. I don't know. "Do you talk about school, or friends?" No.

**Farhiya:** Somali. Anything.

10. What language do you speak with your brothers or sisters? What do you talk about?

**Ayaan:** I ALEADY SAID IT! Somali Bantu with [my oldest sister] and English with Amina. \*describes toys and how they play together\* I don't talk to [my oldest sister]. I go to her room and I take one step and she says, "get out of my room!" She's 12 years old and she's really mean.

**Amina:** I just told you! I speak in English because my little sister doesn't know Somali. **Interviewer:** "What do you talk to your littler sister about?" Her homework.

**Burhan:** English. Talking... tag.

**Bashir:** English. **Interviewer:** "What do you talk about?" Something. My sister plays Lunchables.

**Bilan:** English and Somali. School.

**Dalmar:** You know my other brother takes stuff from me. When my big brother took us to Wal-Mart he took my gum and we say "[brother's name] dado wakade." That means "my brother took my gum." **Interviewer:** "That's what you say to your brother?" Yeah! In Somali you say henjedewe and ugale you say is my gum. **Interviewer:** "Ungale? That's mine!" Yeah. You just said it right now!

**Deeqa:** Both. I don't know.

**Dayah:** Somali, Somali because they barely even know English. I don't know what they say. My three year old sister knows a lot of English. She kind of swears it's the funniest thing. You should hear what my little brother says. I'd tell you but you can't swear at school. It's so funny the way he says the F word. Like fuck you. Fuck you. But he will say sorry to people right after he says it. My little sister knows Somali but she won't say it. All she says is, "I don't caaaare. I don't caaaare." She's so sassy. When you ask her for anything she's like, "NO."

**Faarah:** English. I don't know. They just tell me things. **Interviewer:** "Do they do all the talking?" My older sister comes home before we all do because she's in middle school. So she watches TV before us. **Interviewer:** "So when you get home what do you talk to your sister talk about?" She tells us what episode we're on. **Interviewer:** "What do you watch?" Cartoons. **Interviewer:** "Which cartoon do you watch?" Inazuma 11.(Japanese soccer Anime.)

**Farhiya:** English. Anything.

11. Does your family have any rules about what language you use at home? For example, are you only allowed to speak Somali with your parents/guardians?

**Ayaan:** Yeah my mom has Somali Bantu and my dad has Somali Bantu.

**Amina:** No. They don't care.

**Burhan:** My mom is speak English, my dad is speak English.

**Bashir:** English. **Interviewer:** “They want you to speak English?” Yes.

**Bilan:** My mom only speak Somali. My dad only speaks English and Somali.

**Dalmar:** They say... that’s mine and ungalu... You can speak any language at home but not swearing. You’re going to get in time out if you swear.

**Deeqa:** I don’t really care.

**Dayah:** No (my brother) doesn’t care what we speak but we can’t be swearing at home.

**Faarah:** No.

**Farhiya:** No.

12. Do you have aunts or uncles? If yes: What language do you speak with your aunts and uncles? What do you talk about?

**Ayaan:** I have a aunt and a uncle. I said English. **Interviewer:** “What do you talk about?” How are you doing? Are you doing good? Are you doing your best? Are you having fun? Where’s auntie? I say Ms. C my teacher, Ms. C is the best.

**Amina:** I don’t know, I never met them.

**Burhan:** Yeah. Uncles. Somali. Clean.

**Bashir:** Uncles. **Interviewer:** “What language do you talk to your uncles with?” Somali. **Interviewer:** “What do you talk about?” \*long pause\* **Interviewer:** “Do you talk about school, how you feel, TV?” School! TV!

**Bilan:** Uncle. Somali. School, writing, tests, math.

**Dalmar:** I have a grandma.

**Deeqa:** I have an aunt named \_\_\_\_\_. I have a lot more aunts but I can’t name them. Somali usually. She’s always yelling. **Interviewer:** “Do you talk about school?” No. **Interviewer:** “Your brothers and sisters?” No. She just lets us play with her brothers (I think she meant sons, not brothers.) she only has one daughter. Where’s your classroom? **Interviewer:** “I share with \_\_\_\_\_.” I used to go there. I used to go there with Ms. \_\_\_\_\_. I hated it. All she says is, “let’s go” I say, noooo. I’m not coming. She took my hijab off for me to come there. I was like, gimme my hijab NOW. I grabbed it from her. (talking about how boring she thought small group was). Then I ran back to class and she was like, “Deeqa I’m gonna take your hijab off again.” I and was like, no you’re not. You wouldn’t do that right? **Interviewer:** “No I wouldn’t.” Cuz it’s haram right? **Interviewer:** “I don’t take kids clothes from them...”

**Dayah:** Yeah. I have a lot. Somali. I don't know. They barely come to our house. I just see them outside. The most the just say is hi. That's all they say. They say, "chemfherte?" which is, "are you ok?" and I'm like yeah.

**Faarah:** Yeah. English or Somali. Whatever they ask me. **Interviewer:** "What do they ask you about?" How was your day at school?

**Farhiya:** Yeah. Somali. Anything.

13. Do you have grandparents? If yes: What language do you speak with your grandparents? What do you talk about?

**Ayaan:** My grandparents died.

**Amina:** I have a grandma. I talk on the phone. Somali. I say hi. I don't talk about anything special.

**Burhan:** I have grandpa. Somali. Going to plane.

**Bashir:** In Africa. Yes. Somali. Foods.

**Bilan:** \*nod\* Somali. My sister and my cousins.

**Dalmar:** Somali because she doesn't even know ungala she's a mom. We used to sleep at her house because my big brothers game was there but he left it at our house. You know in Somali we say kajiju. In Somali that's like your saying grandma. **Interviewer:** "So what do you talk about? School?" Yeah school! We talk to her on the phone right now. **Interviewer:** "Because she's in Africa right now, right?" HOW DO YOU KNOW? **Interviewer:** "Because I met your brother last week and he told me." She moved to Africa so she could get her eyes opened. Her eyes are probably opened by now. **Interviewer:** "Eyes open? Is she having eye surgery?" I don't know.

**Deeqa:** Grandma. Somali. When she used to live in Africa. She talks about funny stuff and we just laugh. I don't really remember because she left to Africa. I miss her so much.

**Dayah:** Yeah. Somali. I don't know. They only say "chemfherte?" Or (another Somali word) "how is school going?" and I just say, "all I do is work."

**Faarah:** Yeah. My grandma and my grandma's sister. Somali. She asks me if I listen at school.

**Farhiya:** Yeah. Somali. School.

14. Do you have cousins? What language do you speak with them? What do you talk about with them, school, sports, or friends?

**Ayaan:** Yeah. My cousins when they came to my house they were so weird. They were crazy. They opened the fridge and they ate the whole food. (She stops to de-

scribe how her dad replaced all the food) I bought everything for them. I said, “who wants Sour Patch Kids?” (She stopped to describe playing with playdough with both sisters and making a huge mess.) And then we moved to a new apartment.

**Amina:** Yes. No. Sometimes. English. I talk to them about making games. Making a deal. They have to do five dollars for a chore.

**Burhan:** Yeah. English. Playing hide and seek.

**Bashir:** They’re in Africa. English. Somali

**Bilan:** English and Somali. Writing, and pictures, and tests, and math.

**Dalmar:** Yeah. (Lists cousins) Somali. I talk about playing games. I say, “can I play?” I ask for the controller. You have to get huge hands so your hands can get big (Talking about how to play Fortnite.) How do you know about Fortnite? Who plays it? Your brothers? **Interviewer:** “I don’t live with my brother. He lives in a different state.” Why did he move there? **Interviewer:** “He didn’t move there I moved here.” My grandma too wants to move to out of \_\_\_\_\_. **Interviewer:** “I miss my hometown.” You used to live there? **Interviewer:** “Yeah. I was born there.” I was born in the house next to my cousins. **Interviewer:** “That’s right you were born here.” I was born here? **Interviewer:** “You were born in this state. (He thought I meant at school) Who was born at the school? Are teachers born here? **Interviewer:** “No we’re not born at school. Most of us are born at the hospital.” Who gets born at the school? **Interviewer:** “Nobody I hope!”

**Deeqa:** Sometimes English, sometimes Somali. We say, walahi. They did this, they did that... **Interviewer:** “So you tell stories?” Yeah.

**Dayah:** Somali and English. Random things. School. What they do at school. Do you know (cousins name) he was so bad. He was in the bathroom and he stood on a toilet and looked at a boy. They talk about weird things and I was like, “you talk about weird things.”

**Faarah:** Yeah. English. How our day was.

**Farhiya:** Yes. English. Anything.

15. Do you talk to your family about what you are learning in school? What language do you use?

**Ayaan:** Yeaaaaah. Somali Bantu.

**Amina:** Yes. The language I just told you. Somali sometimes.

**Burhan:** Yeah. English.

**Bashir:** Yes. English.

**Bilan:** Um hum. English and Somali.

**Dalmar:** Yes. (starts talking to me in Somali) **Interviewer:** “Somali then?” You know how when you eat candy I said, I eat candy. Do you know buskut? It means cookie.

**Deeqa:** Yeah. A lot of English. But half Somali.

**Dayah:** Yeah. Somali.

**Faarrah:** Yeah. English or Somali.

**Farhiya:** Yeah. English.

16. Do you talk to your family about how you feel in Somali? Why/why not?

**Ayaan:** Yeaaaaah. Do you want me to show you how I speak Somali? Asalama-lekum, that means Hi.

**Amina:** No. Because sometimes I tell them about how was my day and how school is weird.

**Burhan:** Yeah. My father said is speak Somali.

**Bashir:** Yes. Just a little bit. **Interviewer:** “Why?” (He didn’t seem to understand the question).

**Bilan:** Um humm. When I live Africa I speak Somali.

**Dalmar:** Sometimes. Cuz Somali is good way to say. **Interviewer:** “Is it easier to talk about it in Somali?” It’s hard to talk like you guys are talking.

**Deeqa:** No.... Yeah. (Tells stories about fighting with sister.)

**Dayah:** Yeah. Sometimes I feel weird. Because so they know. My mom barely even knows English. This is her. When she is speaking English it’s like this “whatchadootoday” When we get mad at each other and she hears us swearing she says the b-word and then we all start laughing it’s like weird.

**Faarrah:** No. Because I feel normal. And nothing bothers me. I just watch tv. **Interviewer:** “Nothing bothers you? You never get sad or angry?” Nope! “You have two sisters. You don’t get mad at your sisters?” We all use technology we don’t even see each other. **Interviewer:** “You all have tablets or phones?” I got a tablet and a phone, my sister got a tablet and a phone, and my one sister has a phone and a computer. We all use it in different rooms. **Interviewer:** “So you’re all in different rooms with your tablets or your phones?” Me and my sister in fifth grade play games with each other. **Interviewer:** “On your tablets?” Um hum. **Interviewer:** “When you’re playing games what language are they in?” English. **Interviewer:** “What are your favorite apps?” Rules of survival or FIFA. **Interview-**

**er:** “Do you like soccer games? Do you play soccer too?” Yeah. Describes how he plays soccer in the parking lot with his sister.

**Farhiya:** Yes. I don’t know.

### C. Time Using Somali/Locations

17. How much of the day do you speak Somali? Most of the day, half of the day, some of the day, or very little?

**Ayaan:** Some of the day when I get home.

**Amina:** A lot.

**Burhan:** Most of the day.

**Bashir:** Um. Little bit.

**Bilan:** Most.

**Dalmar:** A lot. But not that much. I know sometimes I do.

**Deeqa:** Only a little bit.

**Dayah:** A lot. My family.

**Faarah:** Half.

**Farhiya:** A little.

18. Who do you speak Somali with?

**Ayaan:** My sisters, my mom and my dad.

**Amina:** My mom, my dad, my big sister. My little sister I have to talk English. I don’t talk in Somali at school.

**Burhan:** (Another student), parents, brothers, sisters, at school.

**Bashir:** My grandparents. Brother, sisters, some friends at school.

**Bilan:** My mom, my sister, my cousins, my family.

**Dalmar:** Brothers, sisters, other kids at school, a little bit in class. **Interviewer:** “Do you use it at Duksi?” You know Duksi? Duksi is fun. You know when you’re all done with your Koran... When they’re all done... (he got distracted and didn’t finish).

**Deeqa:** My brother, my aunt, my big sister.

**Dayah:** Only people who just now came from Africa that don’t know English. That’s the only people I speak to in Somali. There’s this girl who just came from

Africa. You should get her to. I can take you to her. **Interviewer:** “So when they learn English will you speak to them in English?” She does not know English. If the teachers try to talk to her she says this (Somali phrase). It means “I don’t know” in Somali.

**Faarah:** My parents, or my uncle, or my aunt. “Do you use it at school?” Yeah. To help some kids if they don’t understand English.

**Farhiya:** Parents. Sometimes with friends.

19. Do you think you are stronger with one language or another? Which?

**Ayaan:** Noooo. I don’t think so.

**Amina:** I don’t know.

**Burhan:** Stronger Somali.

**Bashir:** English.

**Bilan:** Somali

**Dalmar:** Somali.

**Deeqa:** Somali. I know I speak better in Somali.

**Dayah:** Yeah. Somali. Everything is Somali. Somali is the base.

**Faarah:** No.

**Farhiya:** English.

20. Outside of home where do you speak Somali, for example at school, on the playground, in class, or at Duksi? Who do you speak Somali with? What do you talk about?

**Ayaan:** I don’t go to Duksi. On the playground. I don’t speak it in class. I speak it with A\_\_\_\_. My skin looks like your skin but, but my skin is not.... you know everyone are brothers and sisters? (Here I misunderstood her) **Interviewer:** “Yes. There are lots of families at this school.” No, no, not like that. People that are not in your family they are your family.

**Amina:** At home and outside.

**Burhan:** Outside. English at school. Somali at Duksi. **Interviewer:** “Who do you speak Somali with?” My auntie.

**Bashir:** Duksi.

**Bilan:** School, Duksi, store. (Talk about) writing, coloring, writing.

**Dalmar:** Store... the Somali store. We go there. You’re supposed to speak Somali. Because you know the one that takes care of the store they talk Somali. They



don't know noungalu. Ungalu people talk like... I don't know. **Interviewer:** "What's ugalu mean?" I forgot. **Interviewer:** "It means English right?" You talk English? (He sounded surprised). **Interviewer:** "What language am I talking right now?" \*long pause\* **Interviewer:** "I'm talking English."

**Deeqa:** Do you know Haie? **Interviewer:** "Nope." Ok. **Interviewer:** "What's haie?" Ok. Haie is ok. Sometimes I speak it (on the playground). Duksi. With the duksi teacher. "What do you talk about?" The Koran.

**Dayah:** Sometimes I speak it in school because when people come from Africa. But if it's my teachers I talk in English. But that's sometimes. Somali and English. **Interviewer:** "What do you talk about with (your friend)?" \*describes a game\* Sometimes the boys are bad and they're pushing all the girls down and if they touch a girl they become high (she describes the game they play at recess).

**Faarrah:** At Duksi and at school when I'm helping people. And when we're going to (local attraction) I use it in the car to speak to my parents. **Interviewer:** "What do you talk about when you're in the car?" What time we're going to get there.

**Farhiya:** My cousin's houses.

21. What language do you think is better to use to talk about school? Why?

**Ayaan:** English... My classroom teacher won't understand if I speak Somali.

**Amina:** I use the language... the language that the school uses. Because I don't know some of the words in Somali. I don't know how to say (the school's name.)

**Burhan:** English is better. I don't know.

**Bashir:** English, it's good.

**Bilan:** English. \*shrugged\*

**Dalmar:** Somali... I mean the way you guys talk. English. **Interviewer:** "You say you guys a lot. Are you talking about teachers? Or white people?" Yeah teachers. Because you know, they talk English. Do you know our teacher? Don't you know "unjala" that means "I like corn." (Pun on the teachers name) We told her umeunkununjala. It means "I love egg." We teached her that.

**Deeqa:** English because they usually speak it here.

**Dayah:** English. Because our teachers does not know what we are saying in Somali and they want us to speak English. Sometimes when we're speaking Somali with my ELL teacher... I'm almost getting out of ELL. I'm so happy. Because I don't like ELL. **Interviewer:** "That's my job!" You teach ELL! I don't like ELL. They made it hard to get out. I'm so mad. (We talked about how the exit criteria changed last year.)

**Faarrah:** English. Because we learn things in English not Somali.

**Farhiya:** English. It's easier. **Interviewer:** "Why's that?" Because you use it for, like, the whole day at school. It's easier to explain it then to try to translate it.

#### **D: Outside Family Topics**

22. When you feel upset or sad, what language do you use? What specifically do you say?

**Ayaan:** I use... Somali. I say (she starts speaking Somali) I say, "I don't know. I don't know. I'm so sad."

**Amina:** When I'm upset I use English and when I'm sad I use Somali. Is that what is says on the list? (Looking at the interview questions)

**Burhan:** English, "My leg hurting." (On a personal aside this kid has kicked me while screaming "FUCK YOU. YOU FUCKING BITCH." at me in English.)

**Bashir:** English. (Didn't answer.)

**Bilan:** Somali. "Smile."

**Dalmar:** Somali. I say, "my brother took my stuff."

**Deeqa:** English. I don't know. I'm mad, I'm sad. I'm angry. Stuff like that.

**Dayah:** In school English. At home Somali. When someone is being mean to me I say, "I don't feel good because someone messed with me." I went to (a teacher) but she doesn't help. All she does is help her students. Don't tell her I said that!

**Interviewer:** "I promise I won't tell anyone what you said."

**Faarah:** English. Leave me alone.

**Farhiya:** Somali. How I'm feeling and stuff.

23. Is it important to you that you continue to speak Somali? Can you tell me why?

**Ayaan:** Yeah because I'm not able to be a girl that will be big that speaks Somali. I want to be a mom that's the best mom slash ballerina. I wanna teach my kids to learn Somali.

**Amina:** Yes. Because if I don't know it my family will talk to me and I won't know what they're saying.

**Burhan:** Yeah. I don't know.

**Bashir:** No. Because I like English.

**Bilan:** Yes. I don't know.

**Dalmar:** You can speak Somali right? **Interviewer:** "I only know a few words." Tell me all the words you know. **Interviewer:** (I list all the words I know like In-

shalla.) You know inshalla? Sometimes my sister wants to color and my brother says, “inshalla.” It means another day. Somali is a good word.

**Deeqa:** I don’t know. I. Don’t. Know.

**Dayah:** Yes because it’s good for me to speak Somali at home, but not at school. Teachers don’t like me speaking Somali at school because they don’t know what I’m saying.

**Faarah:** Yeah. Because my whole entire family speaks it.

**Farhiya:** Yes. So I don’t forget it.

24. In the future if you forgot Somali how would you feel?

**Ayaan:** Sad. But I never forget Somali. My momma teached me.

**Amina:** Sad. But at least I know English.

**Burhan:** Bad.

**Bashir:** Better.

**Bilan:** Bad.

**Dalmar:** Sad. Because Somali is the good word. If I forget all of Somali and I just know English I’m going to be sad.

**Deeqa:** I don’t think I’ll forget Somali because my mom is the one that teached us because she knew the most.

**Dayah:** Sad. So mad actually. Angry. Because I love speaking Somali and everything in Somali is what I do. Because it’s my culture.

**Faarah:** Sad because I can’t speak to my family anymore.

**Farhiya:** Not fit in. **Interviewer:** “Who wouldn’t you fit in with?” Somali people.

25. When you grow up do you want a job where you can use Somali?

**Ayaan:** Yeah.

**Amina:** I want a job and I also know English. When I grow up I’m going to be a teacher or a chef.

**Burhan:** Yeah.

**Bashir:** Yes.

**Bilan:** Help my mom and help my family.

**Dalmar:** Somali. And I'll definitely play soccer. You know my big brother? He plays soccer.

**Deeqa:** Yes.

**Dayah:** Yes.

**Faarah:** Yeah.

**Farhiya:** Yes.

26. Do you think of yourself as Somali or American? Both?

**Ayaan:** American!

**Amina:** Both!

**Burhan:** Somali.

**Bashir:** American.

**Bilan:** Somali.

**Dalmar:** Somali.

**Deeqa:** Chinese. I have Chinese eyes.

**Dayah:** Both.

**Faarah:** Both.

**Farhiya:** Both.

27. How does your teacher feel about Somali language and culture?

**Ayaan:** I don't know.

**Amina:** What is culture? (I define it for her) She's ok.

**Burhan:** Somali in I know bad word. I don't know.

**Burhan:** My teacher is speak English.

**Bashir:** English? (Didn't understand the question)

**Bilan:** She speaks a little bit Somali.

**Dalmar:** Happy.

**Deeqa:** She says don't speak it and we say ok. "How does that make you feel?"  
Not bad or nothing.

**Dayah:** Not happy. Unhappy. **Interviewer:** “Do you think she understands you guys?” She does not understand us. Well there are Somali teachers. They walk around the school and they speak Somali. **Interviewer:** “Do you like having Somali teachers?” Yeah.

**Faarah:** Normal.

**Farhiya:** I don’t know.

28. How does the school feel about Somali language and culture?

**Ayaan:** I don’t know.

**Amina:** I don’t know.

**Burhan:** Somali I know bad word. I don’t know.

**Bashir:** We learn Somali at school.

**Bilan:** Good.

**Dalmar:** I think happy.

**Deeqa:** They don’t know what we’re speaking so like they say we don’t use that language. We use English not Somali. Then we say ok. **Interviewer:** “How does it make you feel that you can’t use Somali at school?” Sometimes sad.

**Dayah:** Unhappy. Because they don’t like us speaking Somali in school. You have to go to the office if you don’t... (she got distracted and didn’t finish this thought).

**Faarah:** Ok.

**Farhiya:** Interested.

29. Do you feel proud to speak/be Somali?

**Ayaan:** Yeah...

**Amina:** Yeah.

**Burhan:** (Had to define proud) Yeah.

**Bashir:** No.

**Bilan:** Yeah.

**Dalmar:** Um hum. I’m happy by being Somali.

**Deeqa:** Yeah. (talking about previous question) They don’t notice what we’re speaking. They be like “I think she’s swearing. I’m like I’m not.”

**Dayah:** Um hum.

**Faarah:** Yeah.

**Farhiya:** Yes

30. Would you like to go to Africa or Somalia someday? Why?

**Ayaan:** I wanna go to Africa because downtown is so loud. My mom is so loud. She screams my name like 8 times. **Interviewer:** “So you think Africa is quieter than home?” YEAH!

**Amina:** I already went to Somali. **Interviewer:** “Do you want to go back?” No. But my dad’s mom is over there. **Interviewer:** “Why don’t you want to go back?” No I said I want to go back. **Interviewer:** “Ok. So why do you want to go back? To see grandma?” Yes because I never saw her face. It was 1985...

**Burhan:** Yeah. Africa is my family.

**Bashir:** Yes. I like Africa.

**Bilan:** Um hum. My cousin live Africa. I miss her.

**Dalmar:** Africa. Because my grandma goes there.

**Deeqa:** I’ve been to Somalia and Africa. “Do you want to go back?” No! “Why not?” I don’t know.

**Dayah:** Somali! If I forget my Somali languages I can go to Somalia and I can learn EVEN more than I’m learning now.

**Faarah:** Yes. To see my uncle. **Interviewer:** “Do you still have family there?” Yeah a lot. **Interviewer:** “Are they trying to come here?” Yeah. But some are at London, and Tennessee and Boston. We got to Boston like every vacation. My sister went to London with my grandma last year. **Interviewer:** “Will you get to go to London?” We take turns. **Interviewer:** “Do you talk to your family in London on the phone?” Yeah the phone. **Interviewer:** “Do you talk to your family on the phone in Somali?” I talk to my aunt in Somali but my cousins in English. But I don’t understand what they’re (cousins) saying (because of their British accents.)

**Farhiya:** Yes. Because I never actually saw it because I wasn’t born there.

31. We’ve talked a lot about family and languages. What else did that make you think about?

**Ayaan:** No.

**Amina:** No.

**Burhan:** No.

**Bashir:** No.

**Bilan:** No.

**Deeqa:** (Starts mimicking.) Yeah no yeah no. That's the last question I had.

**Dalmar:** Aneaneunjala. That means I love candy. (then he taught me to say I love cats).

**Faarah:** No.

**Farhiya:** No.